

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**CHAFC General Meeting 2013**

DATE: 9 May 2013 VENUE: Teleconference

**ATTENDEES:**

<b>Member agency</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Museum Victoria	Mark Norman (Chair)
Queensland Museum (QM)	John Hooper (JH) (Vice Chair)
Australian National Insect Collection ANIC	David Yeates (Public officer)
South Australian Museum	Steve Donnellan (Exec)
Australian Museum	Dave Britton
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery	Catherine Young
Australian National Wildlife Collection ANWC	Leo Joseph
WA Museum	Mark Harvey
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery	David Maynard
Museum & Art Gallery Northern Territory	Chris Glasby
Australian National Fish Collection ANFC	Alastair Graham
Queensland Museum	Sarah Verschoore (Treasurer & Secretary)
ABRS	Michael Preece
CHAEC	Beth Mantel

**Guest invitites**

DAFF	Carol Sheridan, Director of Director - Biological Program & Stuart Hogan, Accessing Officer - Import program DAFF
------	---

**APOLOGIES:**

## Venue: Teleconference

### **ITEM 1 – Introduction and welcome from the Chair - (Mark Norman)**

Welcome to two new representatives, David Maynard (QVMAG) & Dave Britton (AM), taking over from Penny Berents.

### **ITEM 2 – Previous minutes from October AGM**

Minor corrections made.

The Chair (MN), requested if anyone has any further changes to the AGM minutes, none responded so the minutes of CHAFC AGM 2012 were declared all true and correct.

**ACTION:** SV to distribute & file the final approved minutes.

**ACTION:** SV to email Member report template to DM – complete

**ACTION:** CG (NTMAG) to email Member report to SV - Complete

### **ITEM 3 – Update on DAFF and specimen exchanges**

Carol Sheridan, Director of the Biological Program & Stuart Hogan, Accessing Officer in the Import program from DAFF, joined the meeting to discuss countries of high risk and the quarantine restrictions with incoming specimens. Leo gave an outline re: gamma radiation and long-term storage of specimens in quarantine, with specimens brought in from Indonesia –current status mostly resolved.

Query to DAFF: Tissue samples from Indonesia (and other high risk counties) are frozen in the field but not in alcohol. Can these specimens be passed on to other institutions?

Response: Stuart - to avoid quarantine specimens can be immersed and preserved in alcohol, alternatively an application to approve removal of material, if not fixed in alcohol must be reviewed and the specimens sent to another quarantine facility (with similar bio-security).

The specimens would need to come into a quarantine approved centre, if they wish to remove them from those premises 70% alcohol, 4% formaldehyde, 10% formalin, 2% hydride. Then apply for approval to remove the material. If you don't want to fix the specimens then they would need to be moved to another quarantine centre of the same specifications.

If the specimen is brought in already fixed or frozen and then fixed the specimens would be able to come in. 70% is the requirement for Biosecurity. Each case however can have an application for release and will be judged on an assessment of the overall solution factors of any potential contaminants to ensure there's no physical DNA or RNA.

Protocols for DNA & RNA are assessed on a case by case basis.

**ACTION:** Common protocol for Museum standards. QM mentioned that DMSO is used but DAFF and mentioned that it's unproved as a preventative process.

CHAFC members to put together a list of issues (to be relayed through Leo as the member of the Biological consultative group) for further dicussion in October.

**ACTION:** DAFF / Quarantine discussion to be put on the Agenda for AGM.

**ACTION:** High risk countries will be emailed by daff. NB all countries with Foot & mouth will be on the register.

High risk animals may not include certain invertebrates as they may come under another program. Cities species should also be considered as well.

**ACTION:** To be added to the next Agenda.

### **ITEM 3 – ABRS Update – Michael Preece**

Brush blitz 2 has been approved and will be run similarly through CHAH & CHAFC.

The next survey taking place in May (BB1) will be the biggest and most complex Bush blitz survey to take place. It will trial a new teaching/learning process which will include five Science teachers and have them reporting back to their classes via Skype. Selection of teachers was highly competitive.

The ABRS report to CHAFC is included below:

**Purpose:** To provide an update on ABRS activities undertaken during the first quarter (January-March) of 2013.

#### **1. Staffing:**

The Bush Blitz team currently has a Departmental Graduate employee working with them for 3 months; Vivek Vijayraghavan is a PhD (Botany) graduate from Flinders University and will be with the Bush Blitz team until the end of May.

#### **2. ABRS Advisory Committee**

The ABRS Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet at the ANBG in Canberra over the period 10 – 11 April 2013.

#### **3. Stakeholder meetings:**

The Director ABRS participated in the ABOLN Steering Committee teleconference on 25 March 2013.

#### **4. Grants administration:**

The 2013-14 rounds of the ABRS Research Grants and Capacity-Building Grants opened on 1 August 2012 and closed on 26 October 2012.

The ABRS Advisory Committee's recommendations on the 2013-14 round of the ABRS Capacity Building Grant applications have been forwarded to the Minister for consideration.

The ABRS Advisory Committee will make recommendations on the 2013-14 round of the ABRS Research Grant applications at its meeting in April 2013.

#### **5. Publications:**

##### **1. *Flora of Australia***

Production is complete for volume 26 (Meliaceae, Rutaceae and Zygophyllaceae), and the volume went to CSIRO Publishing in November 2012.

Editing is continuing on volume 38B (Asteraceae) and part of volume 23 (Euphorbiaceae).

2. *Fungi of Australia*

Editing is continuing on the first of two volumes documenting truffle fungi.

3. *Key to Australian agaric (fungal) genera.*

ABRS is evaluating the opportunity to co-publish (as a mobile application and also thumb-drive) a Lucid key to Australian agaric (fungal) genera – *FunKey* - with the Centre for Biological Information Technology (CBIT) - University of Queensland.

4. *Algae of Australia*

Editing is continuing on *Marine Benthic Algae of North-western-Australia*.

5. *Other publications*

- Editing is continuing on the Australian Echinoderm volume. Two of the six introductory chapters are completed and the other four are well advanced; page proofs of the introductory chapters are with CSIRO Publishing for comment. The five chapters discussing the classes are also well advanced with most undergoing a final edit and image selection by authors.
  
- Editing and layout is well underway on *Australian Longhorn Beetles* (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) *Volume 1: Introduction and Subfamily Lamiinae* - a joint project with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

6. **Flora of Australia Online (FoA Online):**

Work is progressing modestly on developing a framework for the Flora of Australia Online.

7. **Australian Faunal Directory (AFD):**

Modifications to AFD Editor and Public Pages: checklist more user friendly; host species ordered into major groupings; new reference editor and manager (can now merge duplicate references); major reference cleanup ongoing; ordering of image displays now available; fields automatically trimmed for white space.

New species loads to AFD (since 1 January 2013): ~300.

Provision of data spreadsheets to major stakeholders and contributors: 7 in total.

8. **Taxonomy Advice to the Department**

Under the provisions of a partnership agreement with the Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division, ABRS has:

- Commented on draft survey guidelines for the 224 orchid species listed as nationally threatened
- Advised on quotas and the sustainable harvest of 46 beetle species for a Wildlife Trade Operation in North Queensland.

9. **Bush Blitz:**

- *Previous survey*
  - South Australia (Gawler Ranges / Eyre York Block Region), was undertaken over 11 – 23 November 2012. The expedition surveyed areas of Hiltaba Station (Nature Foundation SA) and Gawler Ranges National Park (DEWNR).
  
- *In preparation*

Bush Blitz expeditions planned for 2012-13:

- Henbury Station, Central Australia (near Alice Springs). The expedition will survey areas of Henbury Station in May 2013. The survey will also pilot the Bush Blitz TeachLive program involving up to 5 primary and secondary school science teachers as volunteer research assistants. This will be the final survey for Bush Blitz.
- The planned expedition for Angus Downs (also near Alice Springs) in March 2013 was cancelled due to uncertainties with the availability of on-site property facilities and assistance due to business related issues associated with the property owner. The expedition has not been rescheduled.

- *Bush Blitz Symposium*

Bush Blitz is planning to hold a Bush Blitz Symposium in late July 2013 in Canberra. The Symposium will showcase the extensive amount of follow on research that has resulted from Bush Blitz data collection and the Bush Blitz grants program. A preliminary e-mail testing level of interest has been circulated and a formal call for abstracts will be sent out shortly.

- *Bush Blitz II*

The current Bush Blitz partnership ends on 30 June 2013.

A partnership funding proposal for a revised Bush Blitz program (Bush Blitz II) was submitted by ABRS and Earthwatch to BHP Billiton at the end of November 2012.

BHP Billiton has advised ABRS and Earthwatch that it is supportive of the funding proposal and has offered to provide funding through its International Sustainable Communities Program to support a second phase of the Bush Blitz project (Bush Blitz II) on a matching co-funding basis with the Australian Government. The Australian Government is considering the BHP Billiton offer.

- *CHAH Bush Blitz report*

The ABRS has received the second progress report for the Funding Agreement in relation to Bush Blitz Curation and Data Delivery between ABRS and CHAH. The associated funding instalment of \$150,000 will be paid on receipt of an invoice from CHAH.

#### **ITEM 4 - ALA – JH**

As Chair of the ALA management committee, JH stated the biggest news is that they are on a care and maintenance program. They were successful in obtaining CRIS funding however the amount falls short by about 30% of what is needed.

MN Questioned whether there is a possibility of drawing on funding from a Bush Blitz survey situation. JH thought that the pending election and whether there's an infrastructure fund, despite the previous being set up by a Liberal government.

In a recent NCRIS report, in a review of the ALA, it was claimed to be one of the top five most successful projects but it's future is dependent on infrastructure funding.

#### **ITEM 5 - 3 Big Issues for CHAFC members**

##### **Australian National Insect Collection (ANIC) - David Yates**

1. In the process of hiring a biogenomics research scientist with interviews commencing next week

2. Redundancy program happening with the outcome to be known by the end of the year.

### **Queensland Museum (QM) - John Hooper**

1. Please with the appointment of the new CEO, Prof. Susanne Miller (she is also on the Museum's committee).
2. Major cuts still to happen in the state. Museum is now in the science portfolio and thinks that the Museum may be relatively safe.

### **South Australian Museum (SAM) - Steve Donnellan**

1. They are in the process of finding a new Director and will be looking high and wide.

### **Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) - Catherine Young**

1. 1<sup>st</sup> stage of big redevelopment is now completed and the renovations and changes have been very well received by visitors and colleagues around Australia.
2. Other major project - Inspiring Australia
3. A 5-Year Strategic Plan, requested by Trustees is currently being developed. They hope the trustees will support it.
4. Hazardous Goods – TMAG has been asked to label every single item in the wet collection (vial and jar) containing alcohol. Has anyone else been through this?
  - i. JH stated yes, the QM was supplied with a couple of roles of stickers which were inadequate so the QM now has signs at every door.
  - ii. MH (WAM) labelling was requested when they moved into their new facilities. They now have red labels (HAZCHEM) for larger containers, not small vials.
  - iii. MN (MV) Also uses signage on doorways and lists formalin so people don't get confused.
  - iv. AG (ANFC), Has an in-house solution, a green sticker = alcohol and red = formalin. The storage collection area are treated as one big Dangerous goods storage area.

### **Australian Museum (AM) - Dave Britton**

1. The AM was successful in obtaining some joint storage with the Power House museum, offsite in Castle Hill this will be a considerable saving and the project will be completed in 2015. There will also be an exhibition element in that storage area.
2. Shared digitisation venture fell through (Penny's project). This outcome was typical for other cultural projects in NSW. This project had taken a lot of dedication and organisation so they had thought it was very thorough.
3. Procurement efficiency discrepancy was found in their dividends and as a result there will be some redundancies in research. This was due to the amount of money expected to be lost over the next few years.

### **Australian National Fish Collection (ANFC) - Al Graham**

1. Collection storage is at capacity and they are looking at possible options for expanding offsite. AG requested input. MH – WAM said their offsite storage

was not running successfully and he would recommend resisting if possible. JH added that the QM is currently resisting offsite storage solutions as the collection storage area is now being toured regularly, so it would not be a good idea to take the collections away from the people.

### **Australian National Wildlife Collection (ANWC) - Leo Joseph**

1. Like the AINC they are searching for a research scientist.
2. Wondering when the redundancies will start.
3. Requested input from CHAFC members on Biological Consultative input (questions) for discussion in October.

### **Western Australian Museum (WAM) - Mark Havey**

1. WAM has received funding ½ Billion for a new display building due to complete in 2015. 17 Mill for Whelshpool facility – funding for wetstore and labs. They are at the planning stage.
2. WAM will be declared as a Statutory Authority and they are not sure what to expect.
3. New injection of staff with some external contractor funding and some new curatorial positions have started. Lisa Curcodale – Curator of Molluscs, Nick Tanicas – Entomologist and a Curator of Mammals position is to be advertised as well as various contractor positions.

### **Council of Heads of Australian Entomological Collections (CHAEC) – Beth Mantel**

1. John Jennings has handed over the Chair to Beth at the end of last year (2012).
2. She is aiming to reorganise their website to reflect that of CHAFC.
3. Other news is much the same as everyone else, waiting to see how the election runs.

### **Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery (QVMAG) – David Maynard**

QVMAG has increasing administrative loads, decreasing labor and budgets with degrading collection stores.

As an external (funded by local council) they are having trouble encouraging engagement with science institutions and universities

Their community engagement component overshadows their work, due to the local Council angle and the visitation requirements. They have only 5% of their time put towards research. They are hoping for a change in that ratio.

Research projects – Developing a database on temperate marine sponges and soft corals; volunteers helping with a skeletal fish reference section; website on regional ports. QVMAG is to house Invasive species branch collection.

### **Museum of Victoria (MV) – Mark Norman**

1. MV has had landscaping issues with water leaking into the aging Royal Exhibition building. This has forced the Geoscience collection into the high-risk category. As a consequence of the devastation, some of the collection will be brought out onto the floor for viewing.

2. Funding of \$15m will be put toward a revamp to that particular building. \$7m will also go to help alleviate their current storage issues.
3. The MV has signed a five year MOU to conduct surveys (BB style) with Parks Victoria. The BushBlitz model has been very positive for the museum in fostering new partnerships with other various groups including indigenous groups. MN encourages other states to look at possible partnerships.

### **Northern Territory Museum & Art Gallery (NTMAG) Chris Glasby**

1. NTMAG is scheduled to become a Statutory Authority. How autonomous they will be, shall be decided by the end of this year 2013. CG reported on the discussion and believes it might be good news.

There are no plans to split the Art gallery from the Museum, which is positive. However, continued budget cuts have resulted in a loss of their librarian and photographer. The Library collection is likely to stay with the museum.

2. CG was please to report that he is heading up a new exhibition. The first in five years. The exhibit is about Alfred Russel Wallace (Crocs).

### **ITEM 6 – Field app for species - All**

CHAFC member contributors are on target. JH reported on a positive teleconference with the project group. The Field app development and contribution is looking 60 – 90% complete. TMAG will deliver 100 species, with a June deadline, which is also on target. MV found the data transfer process slow to get corrections into the system.

### **ITEM 7 – ARC Linkage grants - All**

*Issues regarding museums accessing the grants.*

SD: The situation at SAM is that they have cross appointments with at least 20% FTE and can therefore apply for grants through any tertiary institution.

SAM also has an agreement with Uni of Adelaide and the museum to meet on the 20% scenario so they can be eligible for the grant requirements.

The Commonwealth Chief Scientist has an edict and wants research quantified. Universities can do this as their primary source of quality is registered in an ERA System, which all education institutions use. This would be difficult for the Herbaria and Museum to meet, as our research excellence is not being tabulated into such system.

MN (MV): Universities may request a 0.5% FTE of museum staff. Problem is they get a lot more than the 0.2 FTE. They will wait and see, to ensure they don't end up with a 'brain drain' from the museum side as a consequence.

QM – JH: commented that the QM used the 0.2% FTE model but the partnership is an onerous responsibility for QM staff that have cross appointments (with lecture, field trip, PhD supervision and marking commitments). The University is getting a lot more than the 0.2% out of the deal.

AM - DB: Stated that the AM and University of Technology Sydney (UTS) are currently negotiating for an Adjunct position on the anthropological side. This position would be part paid from the University. The AM has also had links with Uni of Sydney which are



successful have been successful. The reason for the partnerships is mainly for access to the University Library and visa versa rather than ARC grants.

#### **ITEM 8 – Ideas for other potential collaborative projects and funding sources - All**

JH circulated the ALA Management Committee Draft minutes from March. Page 5 suggests ideas for future funding.

**ACTION:** Members to read through the options after the meeting.

LJ had a discussion around whether there is a funding/ partnership option for a potential project or group to extract DNA from dried museum specimens – a collaboration on ‘Mummy mining’.

#### **ITEM 9 – GLOBAL GENOME BIODIVERSITY NETWORK – any comments?**

LJ has a meeting with Lawyers to discuss CSIRO position on the MOU with regard to the Global Genome Biodiversity Network, so will not take any stand until after the meeting.

#### **ITEM 10 – SciColl & Australia – DY**

DY attended a meeting for SciColl. His understanding is that it’s in a ‘just launched’ stage and doesn’t believe there is funding at this stage. Suzanne Miller is one of the leaders of the group. JH to investigate further.

**ACTION:** JH to investigate SciColl

#### **ITEM 11 - RapID Update – SD**

Project is complete and will be available end in June 2013. It has gone through an evaluation process investigating the benefits of the proposal across government and to industry, in order to bolster any contributions for funding.

SD suggests a detailed presentation to CHAFC by Andy at the October meeting (teleconference).

**ACTION:** Invite Andy to present on RapID & the 4 pilot projects at the CHAFC AGM 2013.

Other comments: MP requested an update on the 4 pilot projects with BPA – BPA would put \$500k to invest if new money matched the contribution.

1. Project on Steiger Fauna collected through BB (involving Steve Cooper & Andy Austin) – MP thought this great project as it is an indicator of water quality.
2. Other projects – illegal timber identification
3. CSIRO Fish project
4. Pilbura flora from Kings Park

No progress information was available on the above-mentioned projects.

#### **ITEM 12 – CHAFC Finances – MN/ SV**

Account information available upon request.

#### **Bush Blitz Payment Summary May 2013**

Funding total from ABRS = \$700 000

Amount received to date = \$625 000

Remaining payment to come \$75,000 (due at close of contract, now extended to end of 2013)

**ITEM 13 – NEXT CHAFC MEETING - LJ**

Leo Joseph will be coordinating the details for the next meeting – FCIG & CHAFC

Venue: Main Ecosystems Science Building (old Entomology building)

Date to be end of October 2013 - More information to come.