

2003 AGM Minutes
New Zealand Society of Plant Physiologists

The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Society of Plant Physiologists Inc. was held at the Combio Conference, Melbourne Convention Centre, Ballarine Room 1&2, Melbourne at 6:20 pm on Wednesday 1 October 2003.

1. Julian Heyes welcomed the 15 members to the meeting (Roger Dungan, Matthew Turnbull, Mike Clearwater, Jan Binnie, Dennis Greer, Meishing Tan, Deming Gong, Toni Waugh, Tatanya Pinkney, Richard Scott, Di Barraclough, Julian Heyes, Eric Walton, Nigel Gapper, David Lewis). Apologies were presented for David Whitehead, Adrian Walcroft, Debbie Care, Peter Minchin, Ian Wardlaw, Andrew Allen.
2. The **minutes** of the 2002 AGM were accepted (**moved**: Matthew Turnbull, seconded David Lewis; carried).
3. **Matters arising.** There were no matters arising
4. Julian Heyes presented the **President's report** (attached) Julian closed by **moving** adoption of his report (carried unanimously).
5. The **Treasurer's report** was presented by Mike Clearwater (attached). Mike closed by moving adoption of his report (seconded Julian Heyes, carried).
6. **Election of officers.** Julian Heyes announced that Andrew Allen had indicated a desire to stand aside from his position on the council but that all other Society officers have said that they were willing to continue in their positions. Eric Walton nominated Julian Heyes for President of the Society (seconded Dennis Greer); Julian Heyes nominated Matthew Turnbull for Vice-President (seconded Nigel Gapper); Julian Heyes nominated Mike Clearwater for Secretary/Treasurer (seconded Dennis Greer). For Council, Matthew Turnbull nominated Debbie Care (seconded Julian Heyes), Dennis Greer nominated Marion McKenzie (seconded Richard Scott), Nigel Gapper nominated John Clemens (seconded Matthew Turnbull) and Julian Heyes nominated Eric Walton (seconded Dennis Greer). Julian Heyes **moved** that nominations be closed (seconded Dennis Greer) and declared all the above elected. Michael McManus continues in his role as Immediate Past President.
7. **Conference Venues 2004 and beyond.** Julian Heyes reminded the meeting that last year we agreed to meet in 2004 with NZSHS. He reported that since then NZSHS have announced that they will be meeting in Brisbane with ASHS (1-4 September), and that they have said that NZSPP would be welcome to join them at that meeting. The other most likely choice for 2004 was the NZMS meeting in Palmerston North 17-19 November. The NZMS have also said that NZSPP would be welcome to join them, although they had already begun to distribute their first publicity fliers.

Discussion was opened concerning the choice for 2004. Dennis Greer felt that it was a good choice to meet with NZSHS and that the horticultural emphasis and international nature of the 2004 meeting was important for many NZSPP members. Julian Heyes said that in 2005 the meeting would probably be with NZSHS/NZIAS back in NZ, but

2006 may be another Combio meeting in Australia, with 2008 or 2009 Combio to be held in New Zealand. Eric Walton supported the choice of 2004 in Brisbane and 2005 with NZSHS in New Zealand. Mike Clearwater noted that Ian Ferguson, Debbie Care and Ingrid Ennis (not present at this year's AGM) had supported the choice of Brisbane 2004 prior to this meeting.

Dennis Greer moved that the next NZSPP meeting be held in Brisbane in 2004 with NZSHS and ASHS, and the 2005 meeting with NZSHS in New Zealand. The motion was seconded by Di Barraclough and carried unanimously by the members.

8. **Update from the Functional Plant Biology Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC).** Mike Clearwater described the activities of the EAC and the changes that had been taking place with the Journal. The editor Jennifer Henry was very proactive in advancing the international standing of the journal, attracting good quality publications and raising the journal's impact factor. The name of the journal has been changed from the Australian Journal of Plant Physiology to FPB so that it would no longer be perceived as solely an Australian journal. The current ISI impact factor of the journal is 1.5, although an official impact factor would not be provided by ISI until 2005 because of the change in journal name. Jennifer is working hard to shorten the turn around time of the journal, and authors can now expect approximately 5 weeks from submission to a decision on publication. Dennis Greer reported that he recently had a paper accepted in 5 weeks from submission and in print in a further 3 – eight weeks from submission to print. The journal was also publishing a series of special issues, usually arising from conferences or workshops, and Jennifer invited ideas for new special issues and review articles. All special issues and reviews are refereed to the same standard as normal manuscripts. In a recent development the Journal has also been invited (after first enquiring) to join the Federation of European Societies of Plant Biology (FESPB) as an affiliated journal, along with Journal of Experimental Botany, Physiologia Plantarum, Plant, Cell and Environment and Journal of Plant Physiology. If this invitation is accepted it will further raise the international profile of the journal.

Society members are encouraged to support Functional Plant Biology by submitting papers, citing publications from the journal and by encouraging their institution to renew their subscription to the journal.

9. **NZSPP Outstanding Physiologist Award.** In describing its purpose Julian Heyes announced with pleasure that this was the third year the award had been made. This year the award was open to all members regardless of the time since receiving their PhD. The recipient for 2003 is Professor Peter Bannister. Peter will present his NZSPP Outstanding Physiologist Award Lecture on Thursday 2nd October as a Plenary speaker of the Combio conference, and at the same time the award medal will be presented to him.
10. **Annals of Botany.** Nominations are being sought for the 2003 Annals of Botany Lecturer. This year the Annals of Botany speaker was shared between NZSPP and ASPS. We are pleased that Dr Kevin Griffin, this year's speaker, was a nomination from our society. Nominations for next year should be forwarded to Mike Clearwater and a call for nominations from the membership will be made at an appropriate time.

Members should be reminded that there is a requirement for the speaker to prepare a review for the Annals of Botany journal as part of the award.

11. A change of name – do we like our name or could we be Plant Biologists or Plant Scientists?

Mike Clearwater explained that the reason he had added this item to the Agenda was to canvas member's opinion of the societies name. The name Plant Physiologists is often perceived as narrow and old fashioned and is not always a fair description of the interests of the membership. The opposing view is that the name Plant Biologists or Plant Scientists is a broad description and may overlap with the interests of other societies. Hans Lambers (president of ASPS, formerly ASPP) was asked by Mike prior to this AGM why his society had changed to the Plant Scientists name. His reply was that there was an overwhelming desire from members of ASPS to change to the more inclusive name, although some members had opposed the change. Mike noted that there were many of the usual members missing at this year's Combio meeting and that the opinion of the wider membership would need to be sought.

Julian Heyes described how around two thirds of other societies around the world had recently changed to either Plant Biologists or Plant Scientists. Jan Binnie stated that as someone with a molecular / biochemical background she would feel more included with a broader name. Roger Dungan felt ambivalent and was comfortable with the Plant Physiologist title. Matthew Turnbull favoured a name change as more inclusive, and that it might encourage members of smaller NZ societies with shrinking memberships to join NZSPP. Dennis Greer suggested that we could approach the Agronomy Society and ask if NZSPP changed its name would they consider merging into the newly named society. Eric Walton queried why someone would join NZSHS or NZIAS if we were to change to NZSPS, or the reverse – would the broader name overlap too much with these other societies. Julian Heyes described how the Societies were part of separate electoral colleges within the NZ Royal Society. This was why they were considered distinct, although the Royal Society does favour fewer, larger societies.

The meeting resolved that the council should continue canvassing the membership about the possibility of a name change, and that Societies such as the Agronomy Society would be approached and asked for their opinion of a name change by the NZSPP.

12. Other business

Dennis Greer thanked the Society for the award of Life Membership, made in his absence at last year's (2002) Society dinner.

The meeting closed at 7:05 pm.