



New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists

2010 AGM Minutes New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists

The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists Inc. was held in Crowne 1, at the Crowne Plaza, 7.30 am, on Tuesday 31st August 2010.

Mike Clearwater welcomed the 19 members present at the meeting (Don Hunter, David O'Keefe, Jason Song, Brian Jordan, Paula Jameson, John Clemens, Nick Albert, Mary Christey, Tracey Jones, Nick Gould, Lei Wang, Philippa Barrell, Richard Macknight, Tony Conner, Jocelyn Eason, Colin Eady, Carles Ampomah-Dwamena, Marian McKenzie, Mike Clearwater).

Apologies were presented for Kevin Gould, Adrian Walcroft, Peter Minchin, Mary Black, Andrew Clarke, Matthew Turnbull, Paul Petrie, Ian McIvor, Jibrán Tahir, Julian Eaton-Rye, Tina Summerfield, David Whitehead, Kim Snowden, Jan Binnie and Rainer Hoffman, David Collings.

1. The **minutes** of the 2009 AGM were accepted (**moved**: Paula Jameson, **seconded** Brian Jordan, carried).
2. **Matters arising** from 2009 AGM minutes
There were no matters arising from the 2009 AGM minutes.
3. Mike Clearwater presented the **President's report**.
Specific mention was made of Phytogen, which is the ASPS triennial newsletter that includes a section called "State of the Nation." This allows members to briefly contribute details of their research. Members from our society have been invited to provide material for a NZ based version of the report and David Collings is co-ordinating this. Mike encouraged members to contact David and provide material. It is a good opportunity to make links with the 500+ members of ASPS and promote NZ-based plant research.
4. A full **Treasurer's report** was unavailable at this time as Tina Summerfield is overseas. However, Tina sent a financial statement (below) and the full report will be sent to all members on her return.

As at 31 March 2010:

Cheque account	\$5,260.00
Savings account	\$398.00
Term Saver account	\$17, 564.00
Cash	\$200.00
Total	\$23,422.00

This compared with \$25,100.00 in 2009. Mike commented that the reduction in funds this year could be due to the cost of setting up the new website, which was \$3000.00.

Paula Jameson commented that we seemed to have some money building up and that as one of the founding ideas of the society was to support students we should consider further distribution of funds to students.

Marian McKenzie updated that so far in 2010 the society was supporting four students to international conferences with \$600 each, and two students to the annual meeting with \$350 and \$200 (for a North and South Island-based student respectively.) This money was seen as seeding money that would encourage further financial support from their departments.

Mike Clearwater **moved** that the President's report and the Interim Treasurer's Report be adopted, with the full financial report to be circulated to members in the coming few weeks. **Seconded** Nick Gould, carried.

- 5. Election of officers.** Mike Clearwater declared all positions vacant and nominations opened. He said that his two years as President had now been completed, but that no one had been found who was willing to be the new President for the coming year. Mike was willing to stand as President for one more year, following which Brian Jordan indicated he would be happy to take up the position in 2012, after returning from sabbatical.

Mike stood for President again, and nominated those who had volunteered to stand for council again (Vice-President, Brian Jordan; Secretary, Marian McKenzie; Treasurer, Tina Summerfield; Nick Gould, David Collings, Rainer Hofmann, Philippa Barrell and Kevin Gould (Council).

Mike Clearwater declared nominations closed, **seconded** Jocelyn Eason. Mike Clearwater proposed that the nominees be elected, **seconded** Richard Macknight, carried unanimously.

6. Conference Venues 2011 and beyond

2011

Mike Clearwater outlined that the NZ Ecological Society have changed their plans for 2011 and are no longer meeting in Rotorua as planned. The NZIAHS are meeting at the Australasian Postharvest meeting, but this meeting might be too narrow for our members.

Mike suggested that we have a two day meeting in Palmerston North with a strong student focus. This would allow a meeting in the North Island (the first for 10 years), where most of our members are, and a chance for many students to speak. Suggested time was in early July. Paula Jameson mentioned we should avoid late July as this is when the International Botanical Congress was going to be. Suggestions for overseas speakers could be given to Mike.

Richard Macknight said that the plan for the QMB Plant Satellite Meeting at this stage was to meet every second year. It was suggested that we could join with every second Plant Satellite meeting.

Mary Christey said that the NZ Society for Plant Biotechnology would be meeting in Hanmer Springs from 8th-11th Feb in 2011. Members of NZSPB would be most welcome.

The members present agreed to meet in Palmerston North, unless another suitable conference was found.

7. Roger Slack Award.

Mike Clearwater reminded members that the Roger Slack award for 2011 was open to nominees at any stage in their career, and he invited nominations at any time. Mike reported that because no suitable candidate had been found for 2010 there had been some discussion in the committee about whether to open nominations beyond the society's members, or if suitable candidates should be invited to join the society in order to be given the award. Jocelyn Eason suggested the constitution be checked to confirm the intent of the award when it was set up, and how long a person needed to be a member before they could be nominated. Paula Jameson preferred that they be a member rather than looking outside our membership. Colin Eady liked the idea of the award being open beyond members, and said it could be used as a tool to get new members involved. Mike said the committee also preferred that those given the award would be members, he reminded everyone that the website has a current list of members for people to look through when considering nominations.

8. Annals of Botany Speaker.

Members should contact Mike about potential speakers for the Palmerston North meeting (if it was confirmed as going ahead), and include the speaker's CV in their nomination. Paula Jameson said she had heard an excellent speaker at the recent Plant Hormone meeting in Spain, who spoke on the Evolution of Plant Hormones, she would contact them.

9. Postdoctoral opportunities in NZ.

Mike said that he had received an email from Nick Albert outlining the emerging problem of limited Postdoctoral fellowships in NZ, especially with the FRST ones now gone. The group noted the Bright Futures, Enterprise and Top Achiever PhD scholarships were also gone.

There was some discussion about the creation of the Rutherford Award; a small number of new positions that would suit someone returning to NZ mid-career for the first 5 years (salary +). However, the comment was made that people already in NZ on permanent positions were also applying for these, which was not the original intent.

Mike mentioned the statement made by FRST that hundreds of Postdocs were funded via FRST funding, as all people he had asked about this said they didn't fund Postdocs with their FRST funding. Richard Macknight suggested FRST may be counting Postdocs that were semi-funded by FRST as fully funded. Comment was also made that the Marsden applications are favoring PhDs rather than Postdocs.

Jocelyn Eason suggested we discuss this matter with other NZ science societies e.g. NZSBMB, NZIAHS, NZ Association of Scientists, to co-ordinate a response on this matter to the government.

10. Society activities and attracting new members. Mike Clearwater said that the

committee wanted to promote the society further, and as part of this the Logo and Website had been re-vamped this year. He suggested that plant scientists who are not current members be approached to join, and that a flier/poster would be created to go up on notice boards.

John Clemens said that the web site should be kept up to date, and be seen as a useful resource for members. ASBS pays a student to keep their website up to date, we could do the same. David O'Keefe said he had experience with websites and would be willing to help.

11. **Any other business.** Jocelyn Eason gave an update on Plants in Action II; a text driven by NZ and Aus plant science societies. Susanne Schmitt, Rana Munn, Mark Tester and Jocelyn are on the committee organizing the publishing of the second edition, which will be an on-line, wiki-style resource. Copyright forms have been signed and the University of Queensland has agreed to host the book on their website. The old version is currently being scanned to appear there also. Plants in action II will have new sections that weren't present in the first version, chapter/section editors will ask others to write sections. This is unlikely to start this year as Plants in Action I needs to be loaded and edited first.

Mike Clearwater declared the meeting closed at 8:20 am