



New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists

2011 AGM Minutes New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists

The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists Inc. was held at The Energy Events Centre, Rotorua at 5:15 pm on Tuesday 30th August 2011.

Mike Clearwater welcomed the 22 members present at the meeting (Sheryl Somerfield, Caleb Sixtus, Afsana Islam, Srishti Joshi, Diantha Smith, Susanna Leung, Luitgard Schwendenmau, Cate Macinnis-Ng, Kate Calcott, Ari Kornfeld, Matthew Turnbull, Agung Sedayu, Daniel Morisson, Mary Black, David Whitehead, Jimmy Thomas, Justin Sweezman, David Collings, Michael McManus, Ignatius Menzies, Marian McKenzie and Mike Clearwater).

Apologies were presented for Philippa Barrell, Nick Albert, Richard Macknight, Nick Gould, Paul Petrie, Tony Conner, Michelle Williamson, Paula Jameson, Julian Heyes, Jim Crush, Kevin Gould, Simona Nardoza, Jocelyn Eason, Erin O-Donoghue, Bryan Jordan, Tina Summerfield, Rainer Hofmann.

1. The **minutes** of the 2010 AGM were accepted (**moved:** Mike Clearwater, **seconded** Matthew Turnbull, carried).
2. **Matters arising** from 2010 AGM minutes
There were no matters arising from the 2010 AGM minutes.
3. Mike Clearwater presented the **President's report**.
Mike summarised several points from his report, including his thanks to the New Zealand Ecological Society for including our Society in their 60th Anniversary Conference. He noted the previous time the two societies had met was in Auckland in 1983, and that Paula Jameson remembered this meeting coinciding with the visit of a US nuclear warship, which some members of the Ecological Society had attempted to board resulting in their arrest and detention!
4. **Mike Clearwater** presented the **Treasurer's report** on behalf of Tina Summerfield who was unable to attend the conference. Mike acknowledged that it had been a good year for the society financially, mainly due to the Combio2009 surplus of \$5,246.02. He outlined that our income is quite irregular over the years though, depending on the size of conference profits. There were no comments or questions about the Treasurer's report.

Sheryl Somerfield moved that both the President's and Treasurer's reports be accepted, seconded **David Collings**, carried.

5. **Election of officers.** **Mike Clearwater** declared all positions vacant and nominations opened. He said that he had now completed three years as President, as no one had been

available to step into the role in 2010. Mike outlined those standing for council in 2011 (President, Brian Jordan; Vice-President, Rainer Hofmann; Immediate Past President, Mike Clearwater; Secretary, Marian McKenzie; Treasurer, Tina Summerfield; Nick Gould, David Collings, Philippa Barrell and Kevin Gould (Council). There were no further nominations. Mike encouraged any members who were interested in being more involved in the society to approach a member of the council at any time during the year. **Matthew Turnbull** nominated all the people standing, seconded **Ignatius Menzies**, carried unanimously.

The officers were declared elected, with thanks. Mike Clearwater also thanked the council for their work during the year, particularly Tina Summerfield and Marian McKenzie.

6. Conference Venues 2012 and beyond

2012

Mike Clearwater outlined that we usually join COMBIO every three years, which would make our next meeting COMBIO2012, in Adelaide, if we decide to hold to this pattern. The Australian Society of Plant Scientists will be involved in COMBIO2012. Mike reported that a COMBIO2012 committee has already been formed and some plenary speakers have been chosen, but that there is still room for our Society to suggest speakers.

Matthew Turnbull said that he would check with the Ecophysicologists regarding their plans as sometimes they don't attend COMBIO. He noted that COMBIO serves a large number of our members very well.

Michael McManus suggested we should include someone from our council on the COMBIO2012 committee, to general agreement.

2013

Conference plans for 2013 are not clear yet. However, Mike Clearwater said that many of our members have indicated we should have a regular attendance at Queenstown Molecular Biology Research Week, for example meeting there every three years. There was agreement that we need to enquire about future plans for QMB.

Mike did note the general unpredictability of the Plant Satellite meetings, for example last year it was thought there would not be one in 2011, but a Plant Satellite meeting was being held this year.

Matthew Turnbull suggested a COMBIO model would work well for a Plant Satellite meeting at Queenstown ie. we could run NZSPB sessions alongside the Plant Satellite. Mike and Marian noted that there are issues with the Queenstown venue (the Rydges Hotel) in terms of size and usable space, so that this format may not work.

2014

Mike Clearwater noted that the Horticultural Congress is being held in Australia in 2014. NZIAHS, who we have traditionally met with, is expected to be involved in the Congress. We could link into this as well.

7. **Roger Slack Award.**

The 2011 recipient of the Roger Slack Award is Dr Kevin Davies of Plant and Food Research. Mike Clearwater read out a summary of Kevin's work, and outlined his long-term involvement in the science community and with students. He said that unfortunately Kevin was unable to speak at the Annual Meeting this year as he had a prior international commitment, but that it is expected he would be given his award at the Royal Society Science Awards later in the year.

Mike reminded members that next year's award is for early year career researchers (ie. with no more than 10 cumulative years of research since the submission of their thesis.) Members should start considering potential nominees now.

8. **Annals of Botany Speaker.**

Mike Clearwater outlined that the Annals of Botany sponsors an international speaker nominated by the Society to talk at our annual conference. Over the years we have had many excellent speakers attending our conferences thanks to the Annals of Botany's support. This year there was no Annals of Botany Speaker, and Mike encouraged members to consider suitable speakers for next year's conference and to nominate them early. As we will probably be meeting at COMBIO2012, the Annals of Botany speaker would be shared between our society and the Australian Society of Plant Scientists. In the past this has worked well for both societies.

9. **Society activities and attracting new members**

Mike Clearwater reported that Society membership has remained fairly static despite our name change, which was made partly to try and appeal to a wider range of plant scientists, and last year's meeting at the QMB Plant Satellite, which notably had more attendees than any of the other QMB satellites or the main QMB meeting itself. However, this was still not converted into new members for our society.

There were several suggestions from members about how to encourage new members. Matthew Turnbull suggested a short letter is drafted to registrants of the 2010 QMB Satellite outlining the benefits of NZSPB (particularly the student funding) and promoting COMBIO2012 (if it is confirmed we are attending). Diantha Smith suggested we approach undergraduates to let them know about the society. Mike Clearwater replied that the Ecologists sponsor their top undergraduates from each University to their annual conference (\$400 each). Could we do something similar? Cate Macinnis-Ng said we could approach people who are newly arrived to New Zealand, sending them an email encouraging them to join and including a list of benefits. Current members should also be encouraged to approach these people. Michael McManus suggested a reward to members who sign up new members e.g. half price membership fees, as ASPB currently do.

10. **Any other business**

PostDoctoral funding in NZ

Mike Clearwater brought up the formation of the Rutherford Fellowships, which are 5 year awards aimed at promising mid-career researchers. Mike commented this is very effective and important, but has displaced funding for other things e.g. the old FRST PostDoctoral Fellowships. It also appears that permanently employed people are applying for the Rutherford Fellowships, indeed last year 9/10 were awarded to people already in

the country. Matthew Turnbull said the idea of this being that NZ retains people who might otherwise leave. Mike outlined there is currently a letter circulating from the University of Canterbury about issues with the Rutherford Fellowship and asked members if the society should include its name as a signee? There was general agreement that it was not the Rutherford Fellowships themselves that were the issue, rather the lack of funding for PostDoctoral Fellowships. Therefore the Society's name should not be included in the circulating letter.

David Whitehead and Matthew Turnbull suggested that we send MSI a letter highlighting the issue of a lack of support for early career researchers and suggesting development of another scheme to support PostDocs. David Whitehead suggested we could also approach plant based CRIs with letters recommending that they set aside some of their new allocated Core funding from MSI for post-doctoral fellowships. The discussion ended with general agreement that these letters be prepared by the President / Council.

Thanks to Mike Clearwater for his Presidency

Matthew Turnbull thanked Mike Clearwater on behalf of the Society's members for his three years as president and his willingness to extend his term by one year longer than is usual to support the Society. He moved that Mike be formally thanked for all his efforts over this time. The members responded with a round of applause.

Mike Clearwater declared the meeting closed at 6:10 pm.

Omitted from 'Any other business', Added as a note after the AGM:

Report on Plants in Action from Jocelyn Eason

(Jocelyn was not present at the AGM but offered her apology and this report in writing)

Attached (next page) is a table of the Plants in Action Chapter headings with their respective editors (I have been charged with getting editors for Chap's 7 - 11 and have these ones sorted. The list has been circulated to enable 'cross-fertilisation' where information overlaps between chapters

Jen Price is the editorial assistant to Plants in Action and is communicating directly with these Chapter Editors and providing them with the tools they need to edit/revise their chapters

Initially, it was hoped that the new edition of Plants in Action would be ready at least as a draft in time for ComBio 2011 in September. That is obviously no longer a possibility. The new deadline therefore is December this year. The point of the new edition is to update the current research, and that only a few chapters need a major restructure or be rewritten complete.

Plants in Action Editors

CHAPTER	EDITOR/S	CONTACT
1 Photosynthesis	John Evans	john.evans@anu.edu.au
2 C assimilation & respiration	Oula Ghannoum; Evans; Susanne von Caemmerer	o.ghannoum@uws.edu.au ; susanne.caemmerer@anu.edu.au
3 Water uptake & transport	Brendon Choat	b.choat@uws.edu.au
4 Nutrient transport	Susanne Schmidt; Tim Cavagnaro	susanne.schmidt@uq.edu.au ; tim.cavagnaro@sci.monash.edu.au
5 Phloem transport	Yong-ling Ruan	yong-ling.ruan@newcastle.edu.au
6 Quantative growth analysis	Jim Virgona	jvirgona@csu.edu.au
7 Plant growth and options for reproduction	Anna Koltunow	anna.koltunow@csiro.au
8 Physical cues for growth and development	Richard McKnight	richard.macknight@otago.ac.nz
9 Plant hormones: Chemical signalling in plant development	Christine Beveridge	c.beveridge@uq.edu.au
10 Differentiation and gene expression	Lynette Brownfield	blynette@ethz.ch (until September when she will take up a position at Otago University)
11 Fruit growth and postharvest physiology	David Brummell	david.brummell@plantandfood.co.nz
12 Light		
13 CO ₂	Ghannoum	
14 Temperature	Owen Atkin?	
15 Drought	Rana Munns	rana.munns@csiro.au
16 Nutrients	Schmidt; Cavagnaro	
17 Salinity	Munns	
18 Waterlogging	Tim Colmer	tdcolmer@cyllene.uwa.edu.au
19 Fire	Kingsley Dixon	kingsley.dixon@bqpa.wa.gov.au
20 Herbicides	Steve Powles; Chris Preston	spowles@plants.uwa.edu.au ; Christopher.preston@adelaide.edu.au
21 Defence	John Rathjen	john.rathjen@anu.edu.au
22 Secondary metabolism & plant defence	Ian Woodrow; Ros Gleadow	i.woodrow@unimelb.edu.au ; ros.gleadow@sci.monash.edu.au