



## Annual Reports 2005

### President's Report

This is the 27th annual meeting of NZSPP as an incorporated society, and this is my first report as President. I apologise that study leave means I cannot attend the meeting, and thank Vice President Julian Eaton-Rye for standing in my place.

It is a great pleasure for our Society to be meeting with our colleagues in the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science. This linking underscores the important role that our members play in supporting research into plant production in New Zealand and the important questions that are often raised in applied research. This year we have supported 12 students to attend this meeting - this is a very important part of our brief and it is pleasing to see healthy numbers of student presentations at the conference this year. We also welcome Professor Stan Kopriva, of the John Innes Institute, as our 2005 Annals of Botany Speaker and the plenary address by this year's Outstanding Physiologist, Dr Julian Eaton-Rye.

#### **Name Change**

At last year's AGM, I foreshadowed a desire on my part to give serious consideration to the possibility of changing the name of the Society to one that better reflects the breadth of activities our member, and potential members, engage in.

I did promise to work on a discussion document, but must confess I have not made as much progress as I had hoped I would. My current plan is to work on this in the latter half of this year with a view to have email debate and possibly a formal vote early in 2006. If there is a positive response, the vote could then be confirmed at the 2006 AGM. I would welcome any views on this issue over the coming months.

#### **Plants in Action Textbook**

The society has received confirmation from the editors (including our own Paula Jameson) of the planned 2nd edition of "our" Australasian textbook, Plants in Action, asking the society if we would like to become contributors and financial sponsors. The success of the first edition, now in its third printing, is testament to the quality of the product - I would hope that this will be surpassed in the new edition.

It seems to me that this project is precisely the thing we should be supporting - the text is an important showcase of our discipline in Australasia. Clearly our members will be contributors, but production costs will also require financial support. ASPS is planning to commit A\$20,000 in support. On a pro rata basis (in terms of the relative size of the societies) this translates to a figure of around \$5,000 from NZSPP.

The intention is for the text to be produced with NZSPP as equal partners with ASPS (and NZIAHS if they come on board as last time - as NZSHS). This acknowledges the role our

members will play in contributing to the text (Paula is keen to make sure as many NZSPP members as possible contribute).

It seems clear to me that our role will be significant and obvious in the acknowledgements - on this basis the council has agreed that we move forward with a \$5,000 contribution. I am sure this will be an important activity for many of members and the Society over the next year or so.

### **Combio 2006 Brisbane**

I can report that planning has already begun for our joint meeting with the Australian Society for Plant Science at ComBio 2006 in Brisbane. This will be the 5th time we have been involved in ComBio (following 1995, 1998 and 2003 in Australia and 2000 in New Zealand). Meeting at a ComBio conference provides us with wonderful opportunities to hear from some of the best people in their fields.

The organising committee is considering potential plenary (about 15 overseas, 3 locals and 6 special Society Lectures) and about 10 overseas symposium speakers.

The themes will likely be:

Protein structure and function

Cellular architecture and biology

Gene expression and regulation

Signal transduction

Developmental biology

Plant biology

In the recent ComBio meetings each theme has had 8 symposia. The committee would like 2-3 coordinators for each symposium series ("Stream Coordinators") and these coordinators will be asked to secure the services of two Co-Chairs for each symposium. The Symposium Chairs will have the responsibility of choosing the speakers for their session.

I would very much like to hear from members if they have suggestions for symposium sessions under the above themes, if they are prepared to chair such sessions and if they have suggestions for overseas speakers. We join with ASPS in nominating an Annals of Botany Speaker, so this is done by negotiation with them.

### **Membership numbers**

NZSPP, I am happy to say, has remained healthy in the last year. Our total membership stands at approximately 171, with 42 student members.

### **OP Award**

Since our last AGM in Palmerston North in 2004, and as part of a Royal Society of New Zealand initiative to raise the profile of science in the community, we presented our 2004 Outstanding Physiologist, Dr Ralph Bungard, with his medal for the second time at the Royal Society presentation evening in Christchurch in November.

This year we are pleased to welcome Dr Julian Eaton- Rye (Otago University) as the 2005 Outstanding Physiologist. Dr Eaton-Rye obtained his BSc from the University of Manchester and his PhD in Plant Physiology from the University of Illinois. He joined the University of Otago in 1994 and is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Biochemistry Department. His

research interests focus on photosynthesis in plant and cyanobacterial systems and include projects on photosystem II structure and function, light intolerance in shade plants, and cyanobacterial symbioses in lichens. He has specialised in the production of cyanobacterial mutants to study oxygen evolution in photosynthesis and his mutants form the basis of international collaborations in Australia, Canada, Japan, and the USA.

The Royal Society has confirmed that we will be presenting Julian with the award at their November presentation evening. This is especially pleasing as to be included requires some degree of lobbying these days!

On behalf of all our members I should like to acknowledge the constant support of the council and, in particular, Mike Clearwater, who has successfully completed his 3rd year as our Secretary. I think we are well placed to launch into the next year.

*Matthew Turnbull*  
*President, NZSPP*  
*23<sup>th</sup> June, 2005*

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### Treasurer's Report 2005

The statement of receipts and payments for the year ended 31 March 2005 is available as a hard copy.

As of 31 March 2005 we had approximately 169 members on our books (120 Full Members, 42 Associate Members and 7 Life Members). While this represents 7 more members than last year, we have actually had a small net decline in full members over the last 3 years.

Total income is \$1,875.96 less than last year. Income from subs was \$290 less than last year and interest from our bank accounts was \$337.62 less than last year (our 18 month term deposit with PSIS did not mature in the financial year reported here). We received a conference surplus (\$4528.73 from COMBIO 2003), but this is less than the surplus received in the previous year. We organised an Annals of Botany Speaker for the 2004 conference, resulting in a payment of \$5,300 from the journal (in the previous year the speaker was organised by the Australian society and no payment was received by NZSPP).

Total expenses increased for the current financial year by \$3,098.77, primarily because we supported an Annals of Botany Speaker in the current year, and because we managed to distribute \$1,051 in extra funds for the support of student travel and prizes. Outstanding Physiologist costs were lower in the current year because the award was made in New Zealand, rather than at an Australian conference venue.

Student subsidies and prizes increased to a total of \$4,400 this year. We are pleased to have supported five students to attend overseas conferences. Regan Winter, Matthew Woods, and Luxmanan Selvanesan were awarded \$1,000 each towards attendance at the International Photosynthesis Congress, held in Montreal, Canada. Jan Binnie received \$650 towards attendance at the International Plant Growth Substances Association conference in Canberra, and Andrea Pickering received \$650 towards attendance at our annual conference, held in Coolum, Australia. Andrea was also awarded \$100 as a prize for the best student presentation at the conference.

The overall result for this financial year was that income again exceeded expenses, this year by \$3972.88. We therefore remain in a strong position, able to support conference travel for as many worthy students as we can find. We again strongly encourage members to seek new student and full members, and to identify potential applicants for student travel support. We are also well placed to make a contribution to the 'Plant in Action' textbook, as mentioned in the Presidents report for this year.

Our accounts have again been reviewed free of charge by Tania Delahunty, a chartered accountant based in Tauranga.

*Mike Clearwater*  
*Secretary / Treasurer NZSPP*