



New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists

## 2017 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 AgHort Lecture Block, Massey University, Palmerston North at 4:30pm on Wednesday 5th July 2017.

1. Marian McKenzie welcomed the 26 members present (Richard Macknight, Matthew Turnbull, Vishna Weerathne, Zeyu Zu, Samarth, Ivie Papellon, Misaki Clearwater, Mariann Brennan, Daliya Cyriac, Karine David, Revel Drummond, Kim Snowden, Ranjith Pathirana, Jayanthi Nadarajan, Ben Peters, Lynette Brownfield, Geoffrey Thomson, Paula Jameson, Jibrán Tahir, Diantha Smith, Carl Mesarich, Jangi Zhu, Paul Dijkwel, Solomon Wante, Nijat Imin, Marian McKenzie).

Apologies were presented for Nick Albert, Philippa Barrell, David Whitehead, David Burritt, Chris Winefield, Kathy Schwinn and Jim Crush

2. The **minutes** of the 2016 AGM were accepted (**moved:** Marian McKenzie, **seconded** Richard Macknight, carried).
3. **Matters arising** from 2016 AGM. **Paula Jameson** requested a correction to last year's President's Report, where it was stated it was two decades since the society had last had a female president, in fact it has been three decades (note this change has been made).

There were no other matters arising

#### 4. **President's report**

**Marian McKenzie** presented her **President's Report**. She described the reasoning behind the organisation of this year's conference, Plant Science Central 2017, being a joint meeting between NZSPB, NZIAHS and the local branch of ISPB. This type of conference allows more presentation contributions from students and the opportunity for catching up with colleagues. This year's NZSPB invited speaker was **Dr Yves Gibon**, whose attendance was supported by the Annals of Botany. She also mentioned the continued support of our students, 10 students being financially supported to attend conferences this year, including three international conferences. Also the first awarding of the NZSPB Technician's Award to **Robyn Lee** this year. She noted the passing of two of our founding members this year, **Rod Bielecki** and **Roger Slack**, and the important role these members had played in our society. The Roger Slack award was made to **Kimberley Snowden** this year, Marian congratulated Kimberley on her achievement. Also, **Ben Peters**, who was awarded the Michael McManus Award for Best Student Paper this year. She updated members on the RSNZ Constituent Organisation Forum Day and mentioned the coming changes to our website as it is migrated to a new host. She also outlined plans for the Societies' future meetings including ComBio2018 and the possibility of another Plant Science Central in 2019. Finally, she

mentioned that the position of Secretary had not been filled last year, which she hoped would change this coming year.

**Matthew Turnbull** moved that the President's report be accepted (seconded **Kim Snowden**, carried).

## 5. Treasurer's Report

**Michael Clearwater** presented the **Treasurer's report**, noting that our reserves had reduced this past year due to reduced subscription income as many members had paid their two year subscription the previous year, but also as we had increased the number of Society awards, with an increase in associated costs. He commented that we will need to be careful with future spending if we are not to see our reserves decline further. **Paula Jameson** suggested that the Society should not be too concerned as long as we have about \$10,000 in reserves, if it dips below this we should restrict spending. A reduction in the number of student travel awards was suggested, but **Richard Macknight** and **Paul Dijkwel** indicated that lowering the amount given per awardee would be a better option as a smaller amount could still be used by students to leverage funds from their departments, also it was good for their CV's. It was decided to facilitate the same number of students if possible, with lower input from the Society per awardee if needed. The possibility of recovering arrears from members was suggested, but **Mike Clearwater** indicated this was difficult to do. In the end it was decided not to follow up with the arrears. With the launch of new website it is hoped that paying membership subscriptions by credit card and automated reminders will enable the Treasurer to streamline future membership payments. Conference surpluses were also discussed to generate income to the society. **Marian McKenzie** indicated that Plant Science Central 2017 was expected to return a profit, as there were more delegates registered than expected, but she was not sure how large this would be.

**Marian McKenzie** moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted (seconded **Paula Jameson**, carried).

## 6. Election of officers.

**Marian McKenzie** declared all positions vacant and nominations opened. She outlined those standing for council in 2017 (President, **Marian McKenzie**; Vice-President, **David Burritt**; Immediate Past President, **Rainer Hofmann**; Treasurer, **David Burritt**; Web site Officer, **Michael Clearwater**; Council, **Philippa Barrell**, **Nick Albert**, **Chris Winefield** and **Richard Macknight**. She asked for any further nominations, **Ranjith Pathirana** proposed **Jayanthi Nadarajan** and **Marian McKenzie** proposed **Nijat Imin**, who both were willing to stand for council. **Paula Jameson** proposed **Ranjith Pathirana** for Secretary, seconded by **Rainer Hofmann**. As the number of council officers were over the limit of four that the society needed, **Marian McKenzie** mentioned that **Philippa Barrell** was willing to step down if there were other interested members, and that **Chris Winefield** might also be willing to step down. This was to be confirmed with **Philippa (Marian)** and **Chris (Rainer)**.

There were no further nominations. **Marian McKenzie** declared the nominations closed. **Paula Jameson** moved the nominations be accepted, seconded **Lynette Brownfield**. **Marian McKenzie** declared all those nominated as elected unopposed.

## 7. Conferences 2018 and beyond

**Marian McKenzie** reported that next year's annual meeting was planned to be part of ComBio2018, in Sydney in September, but that ComBio was becoming a biennial conference from 2019 on, meaning NZSPB would take part every 4 years, rather than every 3 years as currently. **Matthew Turnbull** enquired about whether ComBio was expected to come back to NZ and **Marian McKenzie** reported that it appears we had fallen off the original cycle of each 9 years this conference being held in NZ. **Matthew Turnbull** suggested this should be re-visited with the organisers of ComBio as the Wellington and Christchurch meetings had been successful and good for the Society.

**Marian McKenzie** re-iterated that Plant Science Central was planned again for 2019. There was general agreement that this would be good. **Revel Drummond** and **Kim Snowden** questioned if it always had to be held in Palmerston North. Marian said in principle no, and that she would discuss with the Presidents of NZIAHS and IAPB the idea of rotating it around the other centres. **Paula Jameson** mentioned that Christchurch would not be in a good position to hold such a conference for the next 4 years due to infrastructure issues. Members were encouraged to lobby for other societies such as the NZ Society for Plant Pathology, Grasslands, Agronomy, Meteorologists to join Plant Science Central 2019.

**Website update.** **Marian McKenzie** re-iterated that the Royal Society will still be paying for our website to be hosted, but that it would be moved and hosted by Prefer. Unfortunately, this meant that the design will change despite the Society having a good-looking website thanks to the hard work of **Mike Clearwater**. With this change it is hoped that credit card payment of membership fees, checking the membership status and automated membership handling will be possible. **Samarth** and **Stevie Noe** were thanked for keeping the Facebook page and website updated. **Revel Drummond** was also willing to help.

## 8. Global Plant Council

**Marian McKenzie** handed over to **Rainer Hofmann** who had attended the GPC AGM at ComBio2016 in Brisbane. He summarized that meeting, with further details being provided in the President's report. **Rainer** said the idea of GPC is to put Plant Science on a global stage and that GPC is driving DivSeek, Plantae, GPC Knowledge Exchange (aim to facilitate knowledge transfer from laboratory to field application, especially in developing countries). He discussed funding of GPC and a planned workshop on stress resilience.

## 9. Roger Slack Award

**Marian McKenzie** congratulated **Kimberley Snowden** for winning this year's award, and noted that next year the award was due to be open to those within 10 years of their PhD. However, she explained that in recent years there was a disparity in the number of nominations for the two phases of the award with many more nominations being received when it was open to all members compared with when it was open to members within 10 years of their PhD. Marian asked whether there are any thoughts about the rotation between early career and all members, and suggested changing eligibility for early career researchers to once every three years. In discussion, other options suggested were to open to all members every year, multiple criteria depending on stage, creating alternative awards (possibly too expensive), or three categories with one award being given each year in any of the three categories (early stage researcher, 5 year body of work at any stage, lifetime achievement). However, it was noted by **Matthew Turnbull** that this would be will be a lot of work for council, and it could be difficult to decide between nominees. Also, the Society already

awards lifetime membership in recognition of contribution to plant science and the society. The simplest answer may be to make every three years open for early career researchers.

**Matthew Turnbull** proposed the motion (seconded by **Kim Snowden**), that the Roger Slack Award would be open for nominations from early career researchers every three years, with the other two years being open to all members (based on a five year body of work in both cases). Next year (2018) would be open to all members, with 2019 being open to early career researchers. Carried unanimously.

#### **10. Michael McManus Award for Best Student Paper**

**Marian McKenzie** congratulated **Ben Peters** on receiving the Michael McManus award, this year. Marian reminded members to consider student members who might be eligible for the award, if they submit a paper arising primarily from their PhD work, within four years of completing their degree, and also including members who are still in their PhD programme.

#### **11. Annals of Botany Lecture 2018**

**Marian McKenzie** re-iterated that the Annals of Botany is willing to support travel for a keynote speaker to our annual conference and members were asked to come up with nominations for next year's conference. This year we are fortunate to have Dr Yves Gibon from INRA, University of Bordeaux, who will be speaking on 6th July 2017.

**Matthew Turnbull** said that as next year as we will be meeting at ComBio2018 if we are proactive we may be able to get our nomination accepted also by ASPS, who also has this same relationship with Annals of Botany.

#### **12. Any other business**

**Rainer Hofmann** has become an editor of Journal Agriculture, they have offered to sponsor conferences through international speakers, so they could also be approached for next year's conference.

**Paula Jameson** thanked **Marian McKenzie** for her work as President and Secretary this year.

**Marian McKenzie** thanked all the members for attending and closed the meeting at 5:53pm.

Minutes taken by Mike Clearwater and Ranjith Pathirana.