

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 1990

### Overview

This year Council business focussed on political and bureaucratic activity. This has resulted from the number and large scale of changes initiated by the Government in the environmental field. The Society has been forced into a largely reactive situation and we have tried to respond, often at short notice, to a range of issues.

Of concern to a large proportion of our members has been the restructuring of the DSIR. The amalgamation of Ecology, Botany, and Land and Soil Sciences Divisions into DSIR Land Resources was the culmination of a number of changes, and became effective on 1 April 1990. The Society's Council followed developments and, where appropriate, informed both Ministers and Departmental officers of our concerns both for the jobs of ecologists and the future of ecological science in New Zealand. We received some understanding and detailed responses from politicians and will continue to monitor the role of ecology in the new Division. We also sought, and received, assurances that the Government would continue to recognise the important role carried out by DSIR in South Pacific research.

At the same time as these changes developed, Government introduced the new Foundation of Research Science and Technology (FORST) to advise the corresponding Ministry. This will be very important both for science and research. We believe it has been important for the Society to maintain an interest in these new bodies, and we will again be watching their progress and decisions.

We have had particularly close connections with some conservation groups this year, examining the extent of our cooperation and adding to their scientific arguments where appropriate. This led the Council to comment on conservation issues, but not without long deliberation as to the nature of our comment. The Antarctic and sustainable management of indigenous forests were, and will continue to be, areas of interest and Council activity.

Sporadic contact with the Royal Society has been maintained during the year. We have contributed informal comment on the slow movement towards re-structuring, at the same time withholding the increased affiliation fees to show our concern about poor servicing by that Society.

We have also met with a number of other organisations representing 'natural resource' interests to discuss the possibility of forming a separate federation. This, too, has progressed slowly.

Our publications have had a mixed year. Publication of the newsletter was a little erratic, due to a variety of pressures on the team involved. However, it looks set to commence the new year with an efficient, revised system. The first of our 'Occasional Series' was published. Thanks to a great deal of hard work by David Norton, Susan Timmins, and an editorial group of Christchurch councillors, the proceedings of the Dunedin conference on 'Management of New Zealand's Natural Estate' is a valuable reference text in an attractive format.

During the year Society membership reached the 500 mark. This allowed for the election of an extra councillor at the Annual General Meeting in August 1989.

Council met six times during the year, including one core group meeting. One other was a teleconference. Following the AGM, the Society moved its administrative base to Christchurch, but full Council meetings continued to be held in Wellington for travel economy reasons.

Councillors responsible for working groups were:

Nigel Barlow - journal Editor-in-chief  
Murray Williams - Royal Society representative  
Bill Lee, Graham Hickling - awards  
Carol West - newsletter, conference 1989  
Gavin Daly, Mary McIntyre - education  
Vicky Froude - legislation, conference 1990  
Susan Timmins - membership  
Mark Davis - Antarctica  
Paul Blaschke - conference 1989  
Murray Potter - membership directory

The Wellington-based Councillors also formed a working group which took on various tasks and submission writing during the latter part of the year. All Councillors, however, have had a busy year supporting the working groups. The progress of the education group has been particularly notable, enabling the Society to once again reach

out to schools and promote an understanding of ecology to young students.

For the first time, we can measure the Society's achievements against the objectives set out in the Management Strategy. We have extended our contact with schools, re-structured our awards, redesigned our membership form, and lobbied the Government on the role of ecological research, contributing to Goal A (promoting study). Goal B (understanding ecological principles) has been addressed by introducing a second issue of the journal, reviewing the newsletter format, and by contributions of individuals to local body staff re-organisation. A great deal of emphasis was put on the Society's submissions to legislation, particularly the Resource Management Bill. If Goal C (ecological planning) is to be achieved, the Society's members must continue to participate in local and central Government planning exercises. High standards in ecological practice (Goal D) will need to be readdressed in the coming years, as the effectiveness of newer legislation and reorganisation becomes clear.

Progress towards the Society's general goal of improving efficiency has been made through widening the input of non-Council members, and tightening up Council meeting procedures. The guide to the annual accounts presented with this Report should enable members to understand more easily the budget within which your Council works.

The 1990-91 year will continue a number of the projects started this year and the environmental legislation programme will continue to need our attention. The Society will also have to decide in which ecological areas its limited resources should be spent. We have not been strong in advocacy below the mean high water mark - perhaps we need to address this in the light of conservation concerns there. Your Council will also investigate links with overseas societies, especially on matters of global concern. We hope that all members feel able to bring forward comments on any aspects of the Society's activities. A new membership form has been devised and will be used in a drive for members later this year.

1990 started with a wave of environmental awareness moving over the general public. This Society is well-placed to ensure that the importance of ecological science as a basis for change is fully recognised. I am sure that we have the membership strength to ensure that and look forward to your support.

Judith Roper-Lindsay  
President

## Editor's Report

Volume 12, at 140 pages, contained 10 papers and 2 short communications, making it about the same size as last year's. Costs have also stayed approximately constant over the last three years.

The new editorial board is working well, although placing heavy demands on its members. On behalf of the Society I therefore thank Jill Rapson, Bill Lee, Ralph Allen, Mike Fitzgerald, John Parkes, and Eric Spurr for all their efforts over the past year. I am particularly grateful to Jill Rapson for seeing the journal through a critical stage in production while I was overseas. I would also like to thank the anonymous referees for their unsung, but vital, contribution to the journal; referees are the cornerstone of Science as we know it, and a bulwark of quality control in an ephemeral age.

Interesting challenges face the journal in the next year, with the change to two issues and almost a doubling in cost, and with DSIR almost certain to introduce page charges of some kind. Presumably, if the Society introduced lower page charges, but allowed members to publish free, we could not only help cover costs, but significantly increase membership! The price would be an even greater load on already stressed honorary editors, but it shows what kinds of options we are facing.

The indications are that there will be no problems in filling the two 1990 issues. Approximate deadlines will be the end of June and the end of December, but these are only for guidance. Our policy is to maintain a flow of papers, and time of publication will depend partly on the rate at which an issue fills up and partly on the extent of revision and editorial input required. Although unnecessary in the past, budget constraints will dictate a strict limit to journal size in the future, which is likely to make it harder to publish long papers.

Contributors are reminded that the journal will publish short forum-type notes on previously published papers or controversial issues.

Nigel Barlow

## Membership Directory

The membership directory is now in its second year, and the database has grown to contain entries on 279 members - representing nearly 600/0 of current membership. The directory not only supplies Council with a useful profile of the membership of the Society, but also provides a vehicle through which the diverse expertise of Society members can be identified and used.

A summary of the replies to the 1989 questionnaire was presented in Newsletter No. 56 (March 1990). It was encouraging to see that a large proportion of respondents (60070) were willing to help with education projects if requested. The 1990 questionnaire includes a new question concerning members' willingness to help draft Society responses to ecological legislative issues. To date 38 positive responses have been received, indicating that this may be an area in which Society members may be able to make an increased contribution in the future.

Now that the database has been established we intend to maintain and update it annually. It should continue to provide a valuable information resource in the years ahead.

Murray Potter

## Legislation

The Resource Management Law reform has been the focus of the Council's energy during 1989-90. We made submissions on several rounds of discussion documents. The submission to the Select Committee was the product of input from a number of members, and was presented to the Committee in person by Judith Roper-Lindsay and Paul Blaschke. Other legislation on which the Society made submissions are the Maori Fisheries Bill (several rounds), the Ozone Protection Bill and the Conservation Law Reform Bill. Select Committee attendance was not possible for these other pieces of legislation because of the difficulty of finding suitable people to attend a hearing in Wellington at short notice.

Vicky Froude

## Awards

In early 1989 Bill Lee, as Awards convener for the Society, completed a review of the Society's various awards. Bill recommended that a new award be introduced to recognise excellence in the study and application of ecological science in New Zealand; this was subsequently approved by Council, and will be named 'The Ecological Society Award'. He also recommended improved procedures for handling Society nominations for external awards, such as those given by the Royal Society.

I took over from Bill as Awards convener during 1989, and have drafted conditions and criteria for each of the Society's awards (NZES Awards; Honorary Membership; Student Award for Best Conference Paper; Student Travel Award).

There was a call for applications and nominations for these awards in the March newsletter.

The Student Award for the 1989 conference was presented to Chris Lusk, and 24 students received travel grants.

Graham Hickling

## Education

The education working group was involved in several initiatives during the year.

A workshop on Education was held at the Society's joint conference with the Soil Society at Heretaunga. There were 25 participants and five invited contributors. Discussions ranged over past educational activities of both Societies, new structures in the education system, student perceptions of scientific ideas, and ecology teaching.

A poster is being prepared for secondary schools (and Society members with young families!), with the theme 'What is Ecology?' An accompanying information fold-out will develop the theme in greater detail for Form 6 & 7 students. This leaflet aims to tie in the ecological ideas introduced at school to the various scientific ideas which make up ecology, as well as to show the relevance of learning in ecology and environmental studies to a range of possible careers. We thank those who provided comments on the text. The poster and fold-out are joint projects with the Nelson Teaching Resource Centre. The poster was funded by the Society, but will be sold to eventually form the basis of an education fund.

The Education group is assembling a display to promote the Ecological Society, its educational group and publications. This should be ready in time for SCICON 1990 (the biennial conference of the NZ Science Teachers' Association). Joint sessions with SCICON, and an Ecological Society conference with an educational theme are under consideration.

Fran Hyland and Jan Heine have reviewed some recent ecological research for relevant material to assist teachers of Forms 6 & 7, and this has been favourably received by local teachers. An article on this has been submitted to the journal 'Science Teacher' with a possibility of becoming a regular feature.

The group is developing a network of education contact people, although is still lacking regional contacts.

Mary McIntyre

## Antarctica

The group, comprising Mark Davis, David Given and Kerry Wilson, was formed in response to increasing concerns about the Antarctic Minerals Convention. Late in 1989 we expressed these concerns to a number of Ministers, at the same time as seeking a comprehensive approach to management of the continent. We have been pleased to see an easing of the present Government's commitment to the convention. Paul Broadly addressed the full Society Council on Antarctic research and conservation and remains a valuable link between the group and others involved in the area.

Mark Davis

## Conference 1989 (21-25 August 1989)

Conference 1989 was shared with the New Zealand Society of Soil Science (NZSSS), and was held at the Central Institute of Technology (CIT), Heretaunga, Upper Hutt. The symposium 'Historical changes in New Zealand. Ecosystems' was held on Monday afternoon and Tuesday. The Norman Taylor Memorial Lecture, on Monday evening, was followed by wine and cheese. The AGM of the NZ Ecological Society was held on Tuesday evening. Wednesday was devoted to field trips to the Wairarapa, Hutt Valley - Pauatahanui, and the Orongorongo Valley. In the evening a video on land degradation in Australia was screened. A panel discussion on Resource Management Law Reform was held on Thursday morning, and workshops and contributed papers occupied the early and late parts of Thursday afternoon respectively. Concurrent sessions of contributed papers were held on Friday morning. There was no formal poster session, but participants were encouraged to display posters throughout the conference.

Very successful student sessions were held, on Sunday afternoon at Victoria University, and on Monday morning at CIT.

In all, 160 people registered, of which no more than 200/0 were NZSSS members. The symposium topic was intended to integrate the interests of members from both societies, but few animal ecologists attended the conference, presumably because the symposium topic was not attractive to them.

The symposium programme was organised jointly with NZSSS, and we appreciated the opportunity to meet together. This was the first joint conference of the two societies.

Carol West

## Newsletter

Newsletter production has been rather erratic over the year. However, four newsletters were put out: no. 53 in April 1989, no. 54 in July 1989, no. 55 in October 1989, and no. 56 in March 1990. Our thanks to Rod Hay and Tony Pritchard, who were responsible for most of them.

One factor contributing to the lateness of newsletters is that, generally, very little material is received from members for inclusion in the newsletter. The Wellington-based Councillors took on the production at the end of the year, forming a team supported by the goodwill of the DSIR Land Resources and DOC Science. We wish to thank these two organisations for their continued support of the newsletter.

Please remember, in the end, the newsletter team relies on members to come up with the copy. Those people who have been contacted to act as, or find, regional representatives, are reminded of this responsibility.

Carol West

## Treasurers Report

### 1.1. Accounts

The annual accounts are probably the least read part of the annual report. This year, I've been asked to give a noddies' guide to what the accounts mean - after all it's taken me three years to find out!

There are three main accounts, all of which show different aspects of how your money has been spent. When money is received or paid out, each transaction is recorded in a CASH BOOK. The first accounts, the RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS, is just a summary of all transactions recorded in the cash book between 1 April 1989 and 31 March 1990. It's not particularly informative since the money isn't allocated to any particular year. For example, the R & P shows we paid \$33,539 on journal production, but this figure includes payments made for volume 11, 12 and the Moa symposium, whereas income for volume 11 was collected the previous year.

To get things more in perspective, the INCOME AND EXPENDITURE account shows only I & E relevant to the 1989-90 financial year. By jiggery pokery and sleight of hand, irrelevant items, for example subscriptions in arrears or advance, are moved to particular accounts on the balance sheet. You can see from I & E account that most of the Society's money goes on journal production. There is very little room to reduce production costs (see budget below). Other major

items are council expenses (in particular air fares), the newsletter and education. You will also note that expenditure exceeds income by almost \$3000. This is not a huge figure given the Society's assets, but the subscription should be raised if we are to maintain the present level of activity. You should also note that many members are in arrears with their subscriptions.

The SUBSIDIARY ACCOUNTS show Conference and the journal production in slightly more detail. Conference ran at a small profit and I was particularly grateful to Carol West, Paul Blaschke and the conference organising committee for financial organisation. The journal costs about \$25 and Newsletter about \$5 out of a membership subscription of \$30. Other activities of the society have been funded from capital and interest.

The BALANCE SHEET shows our debts and assets. On 31 March there was \$30,000 in the bank. The liabilities do not show the cost of producing the Dunedin proceedings (\$5000) or the education poster (\$5000) since both of these will eventually pay for themselves. There is enough money to produce this year's journal and fund limited education initiatives but the assets will start to decline fairly rapidly unless the income increases next year.

None of these accounts would have been produced without the assistance of Robin Luikjen. Hartly Kirschberg completed the audit for 1989-90 financial year but has resigned as auditor for the Society. Hartly has watched the Society grow as he guided John Innes and then Nigel McCarter through the auditing process with tact and patience; ecologists are not famous for their accounting skills and the Society could not operate without the assistance of auditors and accountants. Council has presented Mr Kirschberg with a book token as thanks for many years' assistance.

### 1.2 Increasing Society Income

In the notice of the Annual General Meeting you will see proposals to:

- (a) increase the annual subscription for full membership from \$30 to \$45
- (b) replace the categories of retired and student membership with a single category of reduced membership costing \$20. This category would be

available to unwaged, student or retired members on application to the Council.

(c) Abolish introductory membership.

These changes should increase our income by \$5-10,000 per year. It is now six years since the society raised the membership, and the sub no longer covers all the services to members. The increase won't come into effect until 1990-91 and as a result, the Society will run at a loss for the next year, which will reduce assets and may restrict activity. I think \$30 is low for professional membership. Some generous souls might like to donate \$15 on top of the membership fee to top up the Society funds.

Journal subscriptions have also been raised to \$60 for NZ subscribers and \$70 for overseas subscribers. This substantial increase is to cover postage, which has shot up from about \$2.50 to an average \$7. Again there will be a time lag, since many libraries pay in advance. To date only two libraries have cancelled orders.

In 1989, there were 140 subscribers. Given the large number of overseas libraries and universities, there is potential for increasing the number. The Council recommend that a BUSINESS MANAGER be appointed for a trial basis of one year with the goal of increasing our income by raising the number of subscribers. A working party will define remuneration on formulae, which will be based on commission, and job description.

### 1.3. Next year's budget

A provisional budget will be approved at the next Council meeting. The budget should be approved at the Annual General Meeting.

<i>Income</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
Membership	13500	Journal	20000
Journal	9000	Newsletter	2400
GST net	1000	Education	5500
Interest	3000	Postage	1000
Dunedin Proc.	1000	Dunedin Proc.	4500
		Council Expens.	2000
		Business Manag.	1000
Decrease in assets	10400	Other Expend.	500
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	37900		37900

Nigel McCarter