

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY OF AQUATIC SCIENTISTS
50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD on the 2 July 2013 @ 15h40, Die Herberg, Arniston, South Africa

1 WELCOME AND OPENING

Prof Janine Adams, the society president, chaired the meeting. All members were welcomed and the conference organizing team were thanked for their efforts

2 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attending: Members: Janine Adams (in the chair), Victor Wepener, Nico Smit, Mike Silberbauer, Denise Schael, Gordon O' Brien, Wynand Vlok, Brian Allanson, Leon Barkhuizen, Siyabonga Buthelezi, Meredith Cowie, Abigail Crisp, Helen Dallas, Jenny Day, Jurgen De Swardt, Pierre De Villiers, Chris Dickens, Gerhard Diedericks, Mandla Dlamini, Justine Ewart-Smith, Ina Ferreira, Phumelele Gama, Aidan Henri, Antoinette Jooste, Adri Joubert, Jackie King, Daniel Lemley, Heather Malan, Wynand Malherbe, Kyle McHugh, Brigitte Melly, Alexis Olds, Mia Otto, Bruce Paxton, Richard Peel, Lyndall Pereira-da-Conceicao, Liaan Pretorius, Este Prinsloo, Kelly Rautenbach, Nancy Rayner, Hermien Roux, Geraldine Taylor, Christa Thirion, Jo Van As, Liesl Van As, JC Van Dyk, Johan van Vuuren, Dimitri Veldkornet, Johannes Venter, Aneri Vlok, Ina Wagenaar, David Walker, Deidre West, Olaf Weyl, Darragh Woodford

Non-members: Linda Basson, Peter Ramollo.

Apologies: Mike Coke, Paul Fouche, Digby Cyrus, Ian Bailey, Andrew De Villiers, Rene Glen, Rory Haschick, Earl Herdien, Lucienne Human, Oghenekaro Odume, Annemarie Oldewage, Dirk Roux, Paul Skelton, Juan Tedder, Roddy Ward

3 ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No new matters were added to the agenda

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGENDA

The minutes of the 49th Annual General meeting were accepted as a true reflection of the proceedings. Proposed by Prof Brian Allanson and seconded by Denise Schael.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 49TH AGM

These would be addressed under the agenda items and individual reports.

6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

SASAQs Presidents Report

Prof Janine Adams presented the president's report for the period 2011/2012.

Our society is doing well, membership has grown by more than 20% over the past 3 years and we have now had a number of consecutive annual conferences that have been well supported.

Conference – Die Herberg, Arniston, 2013

Pierre De Villiers and Dr Dave Walker have successfully organised the 2013 conference and we thank them sincerely for this. They have been assisted by others from CapeNature, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the Freshwater Research Centre. It is great to see this collaboration in ensuring a successful 50th SASAQs Congress. Special conference sessions are focussing on Mediterranean, Estuarine & Wetland Ecosystems, Beyond Borders, MPA Biodiversity, Monitoring & management, Ecotones, Ecotoxicology and Pollution. This provides us with a broad overview of active

research areas. In total there will be 72 oral presentations. Five different workshops will also take place during the conference.

The success of the conference over the last few years has certainly been due to the involvement of Petrie Vogel from SAVetCON, we thank her for her continued assistance. The Water Research Commission are sincerely thanked for sponsoring student registration, 31 students from seven different universities were supported. Last year 25 students were supported and so it is good to see this increase. Funds from this sponsorship were also made available for student prizes. The top two students for conference presentations and posters would receive an amount of R2000 and the runners-up an amount of R1000.

International student travel award

It is the EXCO's great pleasure to discuss the possibility of the initiation of the SASAqS student travel award at the 2013 conference. This is a prestigious award to the value of R20 000 that will be awarded to a PhD student for travel abroad. Applications will be called for towards the latter part of the year.

Journal – AJAS

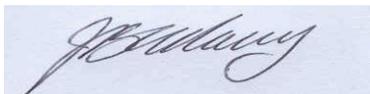
Mike Coke and the 12 associate editors are sincerely thanked for all their hard work on the journal, it is indeed a Society celebration that we have such interest in the journal. There has been an increase in submitted manuscripts (55% more than last year) and a supplementary issue will be published in 2012 to cope with the backlog of accepted papers. There is also a proposal on the table to increase the number of issues from three to four from 2014. The implication to society members is R50 increase in subscription fees. Please continue to support the journal with your quality inputs on African aquatic science, also remember to cite articles from the journal as this all contributes towards the impact factor which was first assigned in 2010.

Awards

The medals awards committee (Nico Smit, chairperson), received nominations for medals and a bronze and gold medal will be awarded at the 2013 conference dinner.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone for their support of our society, the EXCO committee and particularly Nico as vice President. Denise has provided extent secretarial back-up and we encourage you to send items of interest for distribution via our membership network. Let us continue to work together to grow our special society.

Kind regards



Janine Adams

SASAqS Office bearers during 2011- 2012 were:

President – [Prof Janine Adams](#)

Vice-President - [Prof Nico Smit](#)

Honorary Secretary - [Dr Denise Schael](#)

Honorary Treasurer - [Dr Gordon O'Brien](#)

Additional member - [Prof Victor Wepener](#)

Honorary Editor - [Mr Mike Coke](#)

Webmaster - [Dr Mike Silberbauer](#)

President's report was accepted.

7 TREASURERS REPORT

The report below was delivered by the treasurer, Gordon O'Brien:

SASaQs Financial report 2013

In 2012 Gordon O'Brien (Institute of Natural Resources) was selected as the new treasurer of the society and Adri Joubert (North West University) was appointed to assist the treasurer.

The society began 2013 with a positive balance of R372 035.00 of which R164 019.80 was the 2013 opening balance in the current account and R208 015.20 the opening balance of the investment account. During 2012 a net increase of R88 069.00 was incurred. Although a portion of this increase (R29 874.00) includes the profit from the 2011 conference, and should be attributed to the 2011 budget, the remainder was generated in 2012. The society continues to be maintained in a good financial position. The profit made from the 2012 conference totalled R80 756.56. The interest earned on the Money Market account during 2012 (R2 302.58) continues to steadily increase the balance of the account. Following the decision made in 2012 to establish a student travel grant that will be funded by SASaQs, we can confirm that the process has been initiated and details will be provided by the executive committee in 2013.

In 2012, 49 new members joined thus increasing our membership numbers from 129 in 2011 to 178 paid up members in 2012. Currently the membership has further increased to 257 members of whom 113 are paid up full members and 34 are paid up student members. Thirty-eight of these paid up members are new members of which the majority (23) are students. In 2013 only three full members formally cancelled their membership and 1 student. We are still awaiting membership payment from 106 members (80 full members and 26 student members). Student membership continues to be primarily incentivised by discounted registration fees offered to members for conferences. Supervisors of students are encouraged to discuss the benefit of SASaQs membership with students and not only use the reduction in conference fees as an incentive for membership.

From 2010 (3 years ago) the membership fee of R360 (full membership) has been maintained by the society. We now propose to increase this by R50 to R410 from 2014 to recuperate the cost of the increase from three AJAS journals per annum to four. The membership fees of SASaQs at R410 per annum are still less than half of the annual membership fees of comparable societies (including International Society of Limnology (SIL)). From 2012 the portion of the membership which is payable to NISC for access to the journal has increased from R320.00 to R335.00 in 2013 and will increase to R385 in 2014. The remaining R15 per member in 2013 which will be maintained in 2014 will be payable to the society. The student membership fees of R50 per year will not change in 2013/4.

On-going expenses of the society include the payment of the life members' membership fees and the editor's honorarium. In consideration of the financial position of the society and the workload of Adri Joubert, the assistant treasurer, we propose that an additional honorarium of R10 000.00 be made available to her from 2013 for these treasury services.

In 2012 the treasurer was tasked to explore the possibility of registering SASaQs as a Non-profit Organisation with SARS. The outcomes of the assessment include: to register as Non-profit Organisation some amendments to the constitution of the society need to be made (refer to proposed amendment attached) and then the society must apply for registration to SARS.

Finally, as of 30 June 2013, the balance of the current account was R264 381.10. This includes the payment of R60 000.00 for 2013 conference attendance assistance for students. The balance of the investment account as of 30 June 2013 was R186 134.22 so the financial affairs of the society are in a good financial position.

Motion to increase membership fee by R50.00, accepted by majority and approved – Fees will be R410 for full members from 2014.

Motion to increase Honourarium for bookkeeper to R10 000.00, accepted by majority and approved.

ACTION: AJAS Editor Honorarium needs to be reviewed and the society needs to plan for increase and put succession plans into place along with what financial implications that may entail. It was suggested by Prof Jenny Day that a formal Assistant Editor be considered for appointment with an Honorarium.

ACTION: NISC may be able to contribute towards and Honorarium and need to be approached to see if they can help.

ACTION: Determine with Editor and NISC if a 4th volume of the AJAS is a viable long-term option.

Treasures Report was accepted

8 EDITORS REPORT

The report below was delivered by Victor Wepener in Mike Coke's absence.

SASaQs EDITOR'S REPORT: June 2013

The past year has been a tumultuous time for the African Journal of Aquatic Science. The truth is that we now have *growing pains!*

Impact Factor

The 2012 Impact Factor for AJAS is **0.446**, which is down very slightly from 0.471 last year, and down again from our first Factor of 0.479 in 2010. However, the fact that in 2012 we published five articles by overseas authors, spread from China to Denmark, indicates that internationally we are already an attractive publishing option, which may help to raise our Impact Factor. NISC are concerned that only ca. 30% of our published articles contribute to our Impact Factor, and therefore urge us to target articles that will get cited. However, your Editorial Board still sees the Journal as a showcase for good quality African aquatic science in its broadest sense.

Manuscript flow

Every year we receive more manuscripts than in the year before. In 2012 we received 162, i.e. 55% more than in the previous year (Table 1), and have already rejected 46% of them. In 2011 we rejected 68% of the 104 manuscripts we received, some rejections occurring before review because the articles were clearly unsuited to our journal, but many of them rejected *after* being reviewed. That means that a significant amount of our editorial effort goes into the trash bin ! Being made more widely visible by our publishers, NISC and Taylor & Francis, may have its benefits in publicising our journal, but it's also brought us a good number of 'chancers' who hope that we will publish their material for them.

Be that as it may, over the past 18 months or so we have accepted more manuscripts for publication than we can comfortably publish in the 348 pages per year for which NISC budgets. We now always have a backlog of manuscripts waiting to get published. The pressure of manuscripts-in-waiting was such that the November 2012 issue of AJAS became full **4** months ahead of publication date, the March 2013 issue became full **5½** months ahead of publication, and the August 2013 issue, which went online on 5 June, became full **6½** months before publication, even before the March issue was published ! Therefore the "iFirst" electronic pre-publication facility, which began operating in August 2012, is now proving very valuable to the anxious authors of accepted manuscripts.

All this has led to some serious head-scratching by both NISC and your Editorial Board. After considerable discussion, your Editorial Board agreed to be much tougher on manuscripts in future, so as to limit acceptances to only the best ones available. We also agreed to restrict our field to only African surface waters, including estuaries, and to stop taking on manuscripts concerning non-African waters.

NISC have now offered to publish a 2013 Supplement issue to help us cope with the overflow of already-accepted manuscripts. We are currently planning which manuscripts to place in that Supplement so as to make it the most attractive and saleable an item as possible – since that could significantly affect our Impact Factor rating in future. The SASaQs Exco have agreed to co-fund this

supplement to the tune of R14000, which is only part of its total cost. The upshot is that SASAqS members will get 128 bonus pages of AJAS this year without cost to themselves.

Table 1. Analysis of AJAS activity from 2006 to 2012. * = Volumes with 3 issues. † = 15% increase in page allowance. Peaks indicated in **bold type**.

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No. of MSS received	66	62	84	93	75	104	162
No. of MSS rejected or withdrawn	37	34	53	41	42	71	[75]
	56%	55%	63%	44%	56%	68%	[46%]
Volume Number	31	32*	33*	34*	35*	36*	37*
Total No. of pages	328	317	289	304	311	343 [†]	353
Total No. of papers	34	39	38	33	35	39	37
	5	4	1	4	2	1	1
Total No. book rvws							
Authorship							
SASAqS members	7	13	9	15	17	8	10
Non-members	24	26	29	18	18	31	27
Number of articles published per region							
South Africa	20	13	17	13	18	12	24
Southern Africa	4	9	4	9	5	5	3
Northern Africa	10	16	16	11	12	21	6
Overseas	0	1	1	0	0	1	5
TOTAL	34	39	38	33	35	38	38

Journal growth

The newly-formed SA Wetland Society, which has 110 members, is now looking for an outlet for its expected manuscripts and has approached us about accommodating them within AJAS. If this happens, we could receive even more manuscripts in future, but we would also be given an additional Associate Editor to help cope with them.

All this has led to discussions about possibly expanding AJAS to four issues per year. NISC have suggested increasing not only the journal's annual number of pages by 47%, from 348 to 512 pages per year, but also the number of issues from three to four per year, as from 2014.

Naturally, this will necessitate an increased price structure, although SASAqS members are still likely to get their access to and/or copies at a reduced rate. The 2014 'online-only' subscription rate to SASAqS members, for not only a larger but also a more frequent journal, is likely to be R385, i.e. R50 more than it is at present. A bargain indeed ! At the same time, the publishing page charge will increase to R225 / \$40 per page. However, NISC remains willing to waive page charges, after consultation with the Editor, for authors who are genuinely unable to pay them.

Furthermore, NISC have very recently proposed continuing the 'free publishing' concession currently given to Society members, with the proviso that the lead Author, who is not always an article's 'corresponding author', is a *full* member of the Society.

Associate Editors

John Chapman resigned as an Associate Editor in December 2012, and Bill Harding in January 2013, both after many years' service to AJAS. Tony Booth [fish] and Jonathan Taylor [diatoms/algae] both agreed to join the team, and so we're back up to 12 Associate Editors again. When Bill Harding resigned I queried whether Associate Editors got free online access to published AJAS material, to be told that T&F were supposed to have granted this facility when NISC joined up with them, but had not done so. Be that as it may, this facility was granted in February, benefitting the five AEs who are not themselves members of SASAqS.

Journal subscriptions (with acknowledgements to NISC for data and info.)

After an all-time low of 130 in 2011, the number of subscribers to AJAS increased to 144 in 2012 (Table 2). This included an encouraging reversal of the recent trend in the Society's membership, which increased handsomely from 100 to 119. Our recruiting efforts have obviously paid off !

Table 2: AJAS subscription statistics : 2006-2012 (data from NISC)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
RSA SASAqS	122	127	95	95	92	87	103
African SASAqS	7	8	3	2	8	8	10
Internat ^{nl} SASAqS	5	7	7	4	2	5	6
[SASAqS subtotal]	[134]	[142]	[105]	[101]	[102]	[100]	[119]
SA Institution	12	14	14	14	16	14	12
African Institution	3	6	3	3	2	3	2
Internat ^{nl} institution	21	12	8	12	9	10	9
[Institutⁿ subtotal]	[36]	[32]	[25]	[29]	[27]	[26]	[23]
SA Individual				2	3	2	2
African Individual			1	1	2	0	0
Intern ^{nl} Individual						1	0
[Individ^l Subtotal]			[1]	[3]	[5]	[3]	[2]
TOTAL	170	174	131	133	134	130	144

Many libraries now subscribe to journal collections through consortium deals, whereby they get each journal in a collection at a fraction of its regular price, but at the same time subscribe to a lot more journals than they ordinarily would. Access to AJAS through various journal collections continues to grow steadily as libraries take up this option. AJAS is also widely available free, or at greatly reduced charge, in low-income countries. Free article downloads are available to over 100 000 users through African Journals OnLine, and many Institutions have full access through Research4Life initiatives.

AJAS usage

The journal's exposure continues to improve. Usage of AJAS through the new Taylor & Francis Online platform has increased exponentially, from 2700 in 2010 to 9100 in 2012. Currently 70% of people who visit the journal discover it via Google or Google Scholar. Although detailed usage data are not yet available, the following are the top five most-downloaded articles published in 2012 and overall:

Table 3: Top AJAS downloads via T&F Online

#	AJAS Vol	Author	Title	No. of downloads
Top downloads of articles published in 2012				
1	37	Ansara-Ross et al	Pesticides in South African fresh water	102
2	37	van Ginkel	Algae, phytoplankton and eutrophication research and management in South Africa: past, present and future	88

3	37	Akoll & Mwanja	Fish health status, research and management in East Africa: past and present	70
4	37	Marr et al.	An assessment of a proposal to eradicate non-native fish from priority rivers in the Cape Floristic Region, South Africa	62
5	37	Odume et al.	The impact of water quality deterioration on macroinvertebrate communities in the Swartkops River, South Africa: a multimetric approach	61
Overall top downloads since 2011				
1	29	Magurran	(Book review) Measuring Biological Diversity	2016
2	27	Dickens & Graham	The South African Scoring System (SASS) Version 5 Rapid Bioassessment Method for Rivers	294
3	35	Whitfield	A century of fish research in South African estuaries	250
4	36	Murray-Hudson et al.	A vegetation-based hierarchical classification for seasonally pulsed floodplains in the Okavango Delta, Botswana	177
5	36	Nhiwatiwa et al.	Metal concentrations in water, sediment and sharptooth catfish <i>Clarias gariepinus</i> from three peri-urban rivers in the upper Manyame catchment, Zimbabwe	169

Promotions

AJAS was promoted by NISC in May 2012 as part of Marine Biology Day, ranking in the top 10 for journal usage, and at the Aquaculture 2013 conference in Tennessee in February 2013. It will also be promoted at the International Fish Telemetry Conference in Grahamstown in July 2013 and at the Aquaculture Europe conference in Norway in August.

Tailpiece

Finally, whilst your Editors and Publisher always work hard to make accepted manuscripts read well, it was heartening to receive the following 'bouquet' from a happy author in Germany: "I wish to thank you and your team - this is probably my best-edited article ever. Fantastic help, both with the text and the graphics."

Mike Coke
Editor, AJAS
20 June 2013

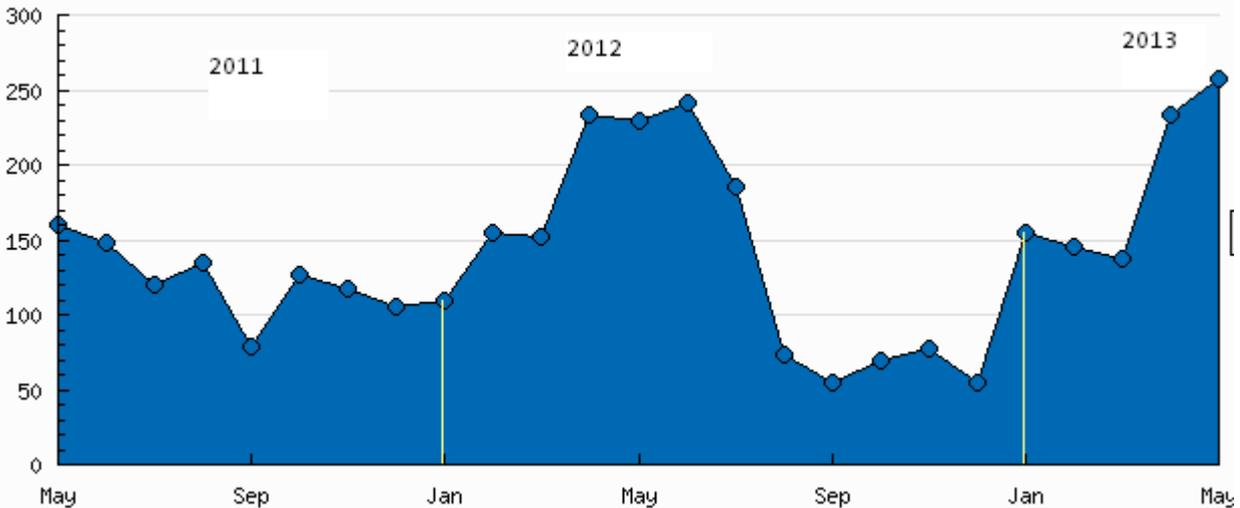
No Action other than from above in the Treasurers Report.

Editor's Report was accepted.

9 WEB MASTERS REPORT

<http://www.riv.co.za/sasaqs>

Number of Unique Visits 2011-2013



Report was accepted

10 COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Nothing to report

11 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

SASAqS Student Report 2013

A meeting was held on Tuesday the 2nd July 2013 at 8 pm by Geraldine Taylor and Steven Osmond (2012-2013 student representatives).

Thanks

The students would like to thank SASAqS for the creation of the Student Travel Bursary, which was proposed at the student meeting last year. This provides students with something to work towards in furthering our careers as young scientists.

Progress to date:

The Facebook page is frequented by most students, and those unaware of this page were informed of its existence. The students feel that this provides an important link between institutions for information sharing (literature, career opportunities, problem solving etc....).

During the meeting the students had the opportunity to listen to an informal address by Warren Aken from Golder Associates about the field of consulting. This was done as many students have very little knowledge about career opportunities outside of research.

Thanks are offered to Warren and two other consultants: Byron Grant and Wynand Malherbe, who cleared up a common misconception that consultants have "sold their soul" to the mining industry and were also kind enough to answer several questions from the students.

Issues raised

As was discussed in 2012 students felt that free online access to the journal would be beneficial. Since student membership fees are very low, it was also suggested that this could be a privilege afforded by those students willing to pay an extra fee. For example - student fee without access to the journal: R50, student fee with access to the journal: R100. This would also promote citing articles from AJAS.

After the meeting the possibility of a combined project between students with different skills was put forward. In essence, a time where the students could meet at a time other than the annual conference and do some kind of sampling and data analysis that would lead to a multi-author article for the SASAqS journal. This would improve interaction between young aquatic scientists and expose them to different research methodologies.

Nomination of student representatives

Two students were nominated as SASAqS representatives, Brigitte Melly (brigittemelly@gmail.com) and Dimitri Veldkornet (Dimitri.Veldkornet@nmmu.ac.za) both from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. These representatives said they would be available to hold this office for at least two years. The responsibilities of the student representatives were agreed to be: the sharing of relevant information about the society with the student members; encouraging students within the society to participate more; and trying to encourage students from other universities to join.

It was also requested that the society give further direction to student representatives as to what is required of them, as past student representatives voiced their concern about the perceived redundancy of this position.

12 CONFERENCES

2014 Conference

The University of the Free State, Profs Liesl and Jo van As offered to host the conference and have made wonderful progress in arranging a venue at the Black Mountain resort which is 40 min outside Bloemfontein. Other organisers will be Deidre West, Isabel Human (UFS) and Leon Barkhuizen (DETEA). From the presentation given, they are well on their way to organising a wonderful conference.

The 51st SASAqS Conference will be held from 22-26 June 2014. The dates were moved to earlier in June in order to avoid conflicts with other conferences being held in July 2014.

2015 Conference

It was discussed that the 2015 conference would be held in KwaZulu-Natal. An organising committee of Chris Dickens and Gordon O'Brien (INR), Santosh Bachoo (Ezemvelo- KwaZulu Natal Wildlife) and Prof Guy Bate would scope venues and costs and begin the process. They were thanked for volunteering and showing the support and activity within the society.

2017 Conference

It was proposed by Mr Madikizela (WRC) that we should explore holding a joint meeting with the International Conference on Ecological Restoration by 2017. There was a discussion around this in terms of SASAqS being subsumed by such a large international society as well as the cost implication that would go with hosting a "joint" meeting.

ACTION: Explore implications (costs, venue, etc) and report back to the SASAqS for further consideration.

13 AWARDS

The concept of a Student Travel award to be given to Student Members of SASAqS to enable them to attend an international conference was presented. The proposed new student travel award would be incorporated into the medals committee, with applications filtered through the Secretary. The award was accepted in principal by members.

ACTION: Circulate draft award application to membership for comment, allowing two weeks for feedback and amendments.

14 HONORARIA

As per Treasurer's report, an Honorarium has been allocated for the Bookkeeper of R10 000.00 per annum.

15 BY-LAWS

ACTION: The new award must be placed into the by-laws of the society.

16 CONSTITUTION

There was no feedback on the circulated updated Constitution from the Society membership.

Nico Smit reported that in order to obtain a VAT Clearance certificate from SARS the Society would need to register as an NGO. This then creates a need to amend the Constitution of the Society to add a "winding-up" clause in the event that the Society disbands. There was much discussion around this issue.

1. Should we become an NGO or not? If so
2. Need for "winding-up" clause and what that would mean in broad terms
3. Amend what constitutes a quorum of Society members needed to vote to disband the Society.

ACTION: Need to discuss further and circulate proposals to members for acceptance.

17 EXCO COUNCIL

2013, 2014, 2015 (elections for new members in June 2015)

PRESIDENT: Janine Adams

VICE PRESIDENT: Nico Smit

TREASURER: Gordon O'Brien

SECRETARY: Denise Schael

Ordinary members: Victor Wepener, Wynand Vlok, Paul Fouche

18 GENERAL

A)

SACNASP (Wynand Vlok)

General awareness that it is ILLEGAL to practice as a consultant and in some cases an Academic/Consultant without SACNASP registration and members should look into joining.

B)

Aquaculture and alien species (Pierre de Villiers)

ACTION: Formation of a working group from Society members to present arguments for proper regulations to be put in place with regards to aquaculture practices. Olaf Weyl volunteered to organise a group.

There was a motion by members to support this.

19 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

25 June 2014

20 CLOSING

Janine Adams welcomed Prof Brian Allanson, a founder member of the Society who then gave a short address on this occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Society (Appendix).

At the 1963 annual meeting of the South African Association for Advancement of Science, Mark Chutter, Graham Noble & Brian Allanson thought that this association had little to offer those who specialised in limnology. They walked out of the conference, met in a pub across the street and decide that it was time to start a new society that would serve the interest of limnologists. They also decide that Arthur Harrison (who was a good friend of the three but absent during their discussions) should be the first president of the new society – The Limnological Society of Southern Africa (LSSA).

(from Ashton *et al.* 2012, WRC Report TT 530/12).

Signed

Vice President (N Smit)

Date

Accepted

President (J Adams)

Date

APPENDIX

ON TURNING 50 !! or 10 EVOLUTIONARY STEPS

A note to the AGM of the African Society of Aquatic Scientists

by Prof Brian Allanson

Arniston Western Cape Tuesday 2 July 2013 and the Society's 50th anniversary

Madam President !

50 years and counting – Surely an exhilarating experience, over these many years, that has seen the extraordinary development of fresh, brackish water and estuary science in Africa south of the Zambezi River.

Step 1. The early work of EAFFRO on east Africa lakes and of the French in the Congo basin provided in many ways the stimulus that inspired Mark Chutter, Hendrik Schoeman, Graham Noble, Arthur Harrison and myself to recognise the need for comparable work south of the Zambezi that was in many respects considered a limnological desert: no natural lakes of any size and rivers that suffered periodic desiccation. Not an encouraging scenario for those of us who had experience of the limnology of the Northern Hemisphere and knew its literature.

Step 2. But how could we excite the interest of any nascent limnologist – even assuming that we knew what the discipline entailed? Clearly a gathering of interested persons was necessary and to that end the Society was formed with Arthur Harrison as our first President in 1963 and our first meeting at Rhodes University in July 1965 with Professor E B Worthington as our first guest of honour.

Step 3. A **Newsletter** that evolved into the **African Journal of Aquatic Science**.

Step 4. Democratic and Peripatic Congresses including invitations to leaders in international Limnology to present current views in freshwater sciences.



Figure 1. A happy band of pilgrims at the Bloemfontein Conference 1994

Step 5. Silver Jubilee, 1988

J A Thornton's editorial in volume 14 No 2: The Journal of the Limnological Society of Southern Africa: Appraisal, Analysis, Approach and Application, including a SWOT analysis.

Colin Reynolds' Address Silver Jubilee Annual Congress, Pietermaritzburg June 1988 ..*May the next 25 years bring a continued strengthening of its science, of its leadership and of its influence on the development of the principles and applications of ecology.*

Inland Waters of Southern Africa: An ecological perspective. Allanson, Hart, O'Keeffe & Robart, 1990 and dedicated to the Society on its 25th Anniversary.

W D Williams in his foreword to this book noted: *"It is, at once both an important contribution to limnology in a fundamental sense, and a most important extension of our limnological knowledge about waters in regions that are not northern and temperate."*

Step 6. National Water Act support

Dr Carolyn Palmer led the SASAQS contribution to drafting a new South African **National Water Act**, no. 36 of 1998. Details of this process, which included novel ideas such as the Ecological Reserve, are in her paper, **Application of ecological research to the development of a new South African water law** (*Journal of the Benthological Society*).

Step 7 Taxonomic guide

SASaQS has promoted and under the strong direction of Jenny Day developed a project, funded by the WRC, to produce the 10 volumes of [Guides to the Freshwater Invertebrates of Southern Africa](#).

Step 8. The stimulating work of Mark Chutter and the later development by Chris Dickens and Mark Graham that together created the SASS5 system of River Health Assessment.

Vanishing Waters Davies and Day 1998, University of Cape Town Press. An unequivocal statement of the errors of our collective ways!

Limnology in South Africa: Past and Present Status and Future Needs. Allanson (2004) in "Limnology in Developing Countries" Volume 4, edited by Gopal and Tarzwell, SIL.

Step 9. .The demands of the **Water Act and the Conservation of the Environment**

Act brought practitioners in freshwater and estuarine systems into close contact with these agencies and their cohorts. This was and is a remarkable achievement and totally in response to Karl Lagler's adjuration delivered at the 12th Meeting of the Society in Salisbury (Harare), Zimbabwe:

Thus, to me, no serious scientist in our field can any longer hide his or her head and avoid responsibility for strengthening our predictive capabilities in our speciality. Neither can we delay any longer entering the arena of environmental adequacy. There is a great need for predictive capability and advocacy in all specialities in the aquatic sciences.

Lagler K F (1976) Forecasting: The Challenge to the Aquatic Sciences. 1975 – 2000. Journal of the Limnological Society of Southern Africa. 2:1-6. And aided and abetted by Jay O'Keeffe, Tally Palmer, Charles Breen, Victor Wepener and Alan Whitfield to mention a few of the major players.

Step 10. International Congress of Limnology

31st Congress of SIL, 2010, Cape Town, in which the Society contributed, under the direction of Johan Grobbelaar. And at which meeting, I was awarded the Naumann-Theinmann Medal for leadership of the development of Limnology in South Africa. I considered this an award to the whole limnological community for, while accepting my unconscious leadership, our colleagues sought new horizons towards which they advanced southern African aquatic science.



Figure 2. Some of the Southern Hemisphere joint meeting at The Wilderness in 1984.

But some questions remain.

1. Have the stimuli that set us on our early road changed – or dulled by time and use? The socio-economic landscape has altered substantially but the demand for potable water increases daily. Who are the guardians of water quality? And has our collective work over these 50 years contributed to the sustained availability of this vital resource? Surely YES, for without the diverse investigations of river and lake communities and their response to natural and unnatural environmental factors the next step would not have been possible. Now we can reject the view I held in 1990 – *“Representatives of the discipline have not become fully integrated members of the resource team”* - they are well integrated now.

2. Our low impact signal – are we doing enough to demonstrate the uniqueness of Southern African Limnology? And even if we do would our studies have any direct relevance to the very much larger holartic component. Is our research sufficiently focussed upon trends that lead to greater understanding of African aquatic ecosystem function or components of specific African ecosystems? I was greatly heartened, in this regard, by a recent paper by Brian Marshall and his team in Lake Victoria that

reported upon the reasons for the reduction in deep-water temperature discontinuities and oxyclines in the lake – changes that are at variance with earlier predictions of rising lake surface temperature.

3. Are we making wise use of modern technological (laboratory and field) techniques to improve data collection for a specific purpose. I note with some surprise that the old order of a single author or at the maximum double authorship has changed dramatically. A glance at the titles in the latest L&O journal reveals a strong tendency towards multiple authorship. One must presume that the nature of the research being undertaken and reported is such that diverse disciplines are required – hence the multiple authorship. It begs the question – “Have we reached the stage that knowledge and understanding require multidisciplinary endeavours?”

