

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY OF AQUATIC SCIENTISTS
46th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 23 June 2009 @ 16h30, Conference venue, Magaliesberg Conference Centre,
Broederstroom, South Africa

1 WELCOME

Wynand Vlok welcomed the members present. He in particular welcomed the students and other non-members who accepted the invitation to attend.

2 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attending: Members: Wynand Vlok (in the chair), Rodney Owen, Nico Smit, Victor Wepener, Jan Roos, Mike Coke, Johan van Vuren, Heather Malan, Mike Silberbauer, Olaf Weyl, Suzanne Venter, Gordon O'Brien, Hermien Roux, Johan Grobbelaar, Steve Mitchell, Edosa Osmoregie, Michiel Jonker, Yolandi Cloete, Piet Muller, Naidu Kurugundla, Paul Fouché.

Non-members: M. Soekoe, T. Botha, N. Gola, H. Winker, P. Kimberg, G. Cilliers, V. Mthombeni, K. McHugh, W. Malherbe, R. Gerber, M. Ferreira, M. Jordaan, D. Impson, C. Bezuidenhout, N. Mbona, P. Buwa, M. Ramoejane, J. Nhleko, P. Moloj, C. van Dyk, S. Dyke, F. Arimoro, G. Howatson

Apologies: Brian Allanson, Nancy Rayner, Jenny Day, Digby Cyrus, Hendrik Jerling Lew Taylor, Allen Whitfield, Ferdie De Moor, Hellen Dallas, Chris Dickens.

3 ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

The following were added to the circulated agenda:

- a. Student registration
- b. Proceedings

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGENDA

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the proceedings. Proposed by Mike Coke which was seconded by Wynand Vlok.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 45TH AGM

No matters were identified

6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The president, Wynand Vlok, reported as follows:

I want to welcome everybody to the meeting and report on the activities over the last year.

First I want to thank Prof Digby Cyrus, Dr Rodney Owen and Dr Hendrik Jerling for their term in office. It was not easy and a few difficult decisions landed in their laps. The transfer from their committee to the new committee was delayed because of the conference not taking place during 2008.

As you are aware, we received an offer to host a conference in Natal in June/July 2008, but this was later postponed for September 2008. In the end, no conference took place and that meant that we had a crammed period towards the end of 2008. The decision was taken to let things stand over until 2009. The new committee decided to look at options for a conference in 2009.

As you know by now, Jan Roos is the Vice President, Nico Smit is the Honorary Treasurer, Paul Fouché is the Honorary Secretary and Victor Wepener is the additional member. Mike Coke is still doing a sterling job as the Honorary Editor for our even more successful journal. Mike Silberbauer is running the web page.

It was decided to host the 2009 conference at the Magaliesberg Conference Centre near Broederstroom (Beyond rapid assessments - time for an aquatic research renaissance in southern Africa). The 2010 conference will be hosted at Augrabies National Park (Aquatic biodiversity and climate change – an arid region perspective) and the 2011 conference will be hosted at Pongola (Sustainable utilisation of southern African aquatic resources). Jan Roos will give some information on the 2010 and Nico Smit on the 2011 conference.

Two important aspects must be tackled in the next two years: 1) we must look to get more members, including southern African members and to get the student members involved and 2) to update the constitution and bylaws (if needed). We are in the process to contact members from outside South Africa to get them to help to get chapters started in neighbouring countries. If anyone has contacts, please contact me in this regard. We must get the current members at Universities to motivate students to join the society. The fee for students must be debated again during this meeting.

The issue around the constitution and byelaws is important, as it seems that some aspects need an update. Although the constitution was reviewed in 2006, we will have a close look at it to see if anything needs attention. Please feel free to comment on this issue.

Membership is down. I think all members must approach one colleague to join. With the new exposure of the journal, including an ISI rating soon, it will be a good reason to get new members to join. Thank you to those who have promptly paid the subscription fees. Nico is in the process to contact all members with accounts in the arrears to rectify the issue.

I am of the opinion that effective communication will lead to the success of the society. As a learned society, we aim to get an effective network of interested parties to use the forum to the advantage of all in the water sector. The newsletter is a very practical way to get this communication going. I want to urge members to send items to Paul or myself. We will use this to stimulate debate. Yes, we are all busy, but some time must be spent to get the ideas across to other people in the sector and the newsletter is the most effective way.

In conclusion I want to ask members to make this your society. Please assist us to get things in place that you see as a need. If we do not make changes, the society will stagnate.

I thank you for your attention,

Wynand Vlok

Nico Smit proposed that the report be accepted. This was seconded by Victor Wepener and the report was accepted by the meeting.

7 TREASURERS REPORT

The Honorary treasurer, Nico Smit, reported as follows:

Membership fees

Since invoices were sent out in March payment of Membership fees has slowly but surely trickled in. Currently we have 83 paid up members (including 2 life members), still a few short of the 105 paid up members we had in 2008. Although the number of paid up members is less, we still had 11 new members joining the society in 2009 which is at least a great sign of the society still growing. In the light of this I would really urge members who have not paid yet to please pay their membership ASAP and if you need a new invoice, please let me know and I'll send you one. Also remember to send me your proof of payment once you have paid your subs.

Finances

The good news is that currently our society's accounts are all in the green, but the bad news is that we don't really have a lot of money to use for extra things, for example student bursaries to conferences etc. The main reason for that is that almost 90% of the membership fees go straight to NISC for journal subscription. The remainder, plus interest earned from our accounts, is used to pay our editor as well as paying the subscription of the life members. So there is currently no growth. Although we have not yet

come up with specific ideas of how to increase our funds we are working on it and will appreciate input from members.

SASaQs 2009 conference

Since there are still some outstanding conference registration fees (!!) as well as funding from sponsors, we have not yet been able to finalize the conference account. However, largely due to sponsorship from the WRC (student registration discount) and Centre for Aquatic Research @ UJ (the Monday night dinner function) we will definitely be able to show a small profit. This extra money will be used to even further reduce student registration fees for the 2010 conference as well as for student prizes.

General

All in all I think everything is going well from a financial side, but it will be even much better if all members pay their subs!

Cheers

Nico Smit

Rodney Owen proposed that the report be accepted. The chairperson thanked Nico Smit for his efforts. In the discussions that followed Olaf Weyl suggested the benefits for student's subscribing be investigated. Johan Grobbelaar proposed that management has mandate to look at matters. Based on the above it was proposed that a questionnaire is sent to students to establish their views.

8 EDITORS REPORT

The editor of AJAS, Mike Coke delivered the report below:

This year I again need to report on two years' worth of journal publishing, for 2007 (Volume 32) and 2008 (Volume 33).

We have now successfully published three issues of the journal per year for two years. What's more, NISC have even been able to organize hard copies for those who really wish to have them, and these will continue to be available in the future – at a price. Having the journal come out every fourth month potentially shortens the turn-around time for manuscripts. Nevertheless, turn-around time still really depends on three things: the quality of the original manuscript, the readiness of the reviewers to play their part, as well as the author's readiness to make whatever amendments are recommended. One or two of our referees have been exemplary, returning their reviews within one day, or even same-day service in one instance. Others, regrettably, have tended to wait for me to remind them, which I try to do every five weeks or so, before they get cracking. I have had occasion to black-list some referees and book-reviewers as being unreliable.

Both I and NISC have improved our service-delivery times over the past year. In 2008 the full texts of Volume 33(1) came online 30 days later than planned, whilst Volume 33(2) came online 34 days late. But Volume 33(3) came online only four days later than planned.

Manuscripts: *In 2007 we received 61 manuscripts for consideration, almost the same number as in the previous year. Then in 2008 this jumped to an all-time high of 86 manuscripts received (Table 1). If one takes into account the repeated correspondence with authors, referees and the publisher, handling 86 manuscripts make for between 200 and 350 e-mails written per month and an almost equal number received. Once a manuscript has been scientifically accepted by its referees I juggle its language around a bit (or a lot, as the case may require) so as to make it read as clearly and understandably as possible. Some authors have expressed appreciation for these efforts of mine. The end result of all this activity was 317 pages of text published in Vol. 32 (2007) but only 289 in Vol. 33 (2008).*

The other side of the coin is the number of manuscripts that get rejected, withdrawn or deleted (meaning scrapped from our list, due to inaction by the author). In 2007 52% of the manuscripts received became rejected and in 2008 this figure was 45%.

Table 1: Analysis of the Journal from 2001 to 2008

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	[2009]
# MSS received	30	31	47	57	73	62	61	86	[51]
# MSS rejected/w.drawn	2	11	21	22	42	37	32	39	[9]
Volume Number	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
Total No. of pages	147	174	195	291	221	328	317	289	[110]
Total No. of papers	19	20	23	32	28	34	39	38	[12]
Total No. of book reviews	1	7	3	8	9	5	4	1	[0]
Authorship									
SASAQs members	13	10	8	8	9	7	13	9	[2]
Non-members	6	6	13	24	19	24	26	29	[10]
Number of items published per region									
South Africa	16	17	10	14	11	20	13	17	[2]
Southern Africa	2	1	7	9	6	4	9	4	[2]
Africa	0	2	6	9	10	10	16	16	[8]
Overseas	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	[0]
TOTAL No. authors	19	20	23	32	28	34	39	38	[12]

Editorial Board and Sub-Editors: In 2007/8 three of our eight Editorial Board members retired and this year they were replaced by Prof. Paul Grobler, Prof. Frank Kansime (who agreed to come back after a spell off the Board) and Dr Alan Whitfield. All Editorial Board members are specialists in their particular field, and each helps me by refereeing some manuscripts each year. But, because of the daunting variety of subjects covered by the manuscripts we receive, I have also tried to draw in some more specialist Associate Editors. In this I was rather more successful than I had dared to hope, and now we have six Associate Editors as follows: Dr Horst Kaiser (aquaculture), Prof. Victor Wepener (ecotoxicology), Dr Bill Harding (diatoms), Prof. William Ellery and Dr Clive Howard-Williams (both on wetlands), and finally Dr Ferdy de Moor (macroinvertebrates). These gentlemen bring our journal's editorial team to a total of 14. But that's not to say that they now do all the work and I sit back and relax! There are still a large number of manuscripts that fall into fields not covered by any of our editorial team. And there are also times when a team member is unable to take on the processing of a specific manuscript, which I then handle myself.

Journal subscriptions: The numbers of subscribers to the journal in recent years have been as follows (Table 2):

Table 2: AJAS subscription statistics : 2002-2008 (data from NISC)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
SA SASAQs Soc.	181	153	123	146	122	127	95
African SASAQs Soc.	23	19	8	1	7	8	3
International SASAQs	9	7	5	7	5	7	7
[Subtotal SASAQs	[213]	[179]	[136]	[154]	[134]	[142]	[105]
SA Institution	13	15	13	13	12	14	14
African Institution	4	3	3	3	3	6	3
Internat ^{nl} institution	15	18	18	16	21	12	8
African Individual							1
TOTAL	245	214	170	186	170	174	131

Clearly, the SASAqS Society numbers are now in crisis – never have we had so few Society members or journal subscribers, and this probably endangers our publishing viability. Now's the time for us to make a drive for additional members. I've been making NISC's admirable free-publishing offer to paid-up SASAqS members known to every author who submits a manuscript to AJAS. But I'd suggest that the Society itself approaches every author, and every University Department with which those authors are associated, so as to attempt to boost Society membership.

Publishing changes: The most exciting and progressive publishing news for our journal is NISC's very recent collaborative agreement with the British publishing house of Taylor and Francis. The international publicity that this facility will bring is likely to increase our overseas readership, besides which their web-based manuscript-handling system is expected to improve the reviewing, editing and publishing of manuscripts in the future. Although the latter facility was expected to be up-and-running by now (June 2008), it has not happened yet. Be that as it may, there's no doubt that for AJAS the future will be "interesting"!

Mike Coke
Editor, African Journal of Aquatic Science
20 June 2009

In reply the meeting expressed their appreciation for the report and Wynand Vlok thanked Mike for the excellent job he has been doing over the years.

9 COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS.

The chairperson raised his concern about this aspect but reported that he spoken to some of the people present (Frances, Omoregie and Naidoo) to see if we can start a chapter going in their countries. He also discussed it with Richard Boycott. He will report progress to the members. Olaf Weyl suggested the larger registration amount that non-members paid for conferences be used for one years subscription for the person registering. In general this was accepted by the meeting.

10 CONFERENCES

2010 Conference

Jan Roos reported that he was still willing to host the 2010 conference but pointed out that it should not clash with SIL (15 – 20 August). He suggested the school holidays (9 – 13 July) as a possible date with either Au-grabies or Golden Gate as venues. Dean Impson suggested the 13 – 16 July as alternative dates

Johan Grobbelaar requested the meeting to rethink the SASAqS 2010 conference. After some debate it was decided to support SIL but still have the SASAqS conference. Rodney Owen pointed out that this would cater for the estuarine people who can not participate in SIL.

Jan Roos was requested to continue with arrangements and was agreed that the membership will be informed through the newsletter about decisions.

2011 and 2012 conferences.

Nico Smit confirmed his willingness to host the 2011 conference and pointed out that it will be at Pongola to coincide with their tiger fish research.

Wynand Vlok indicated that at this point arrangements concerning the 2012 conference had not been fixed but it would possibly be in Botswana.

11 AWARDS

Wynand Vlok reported that one nomination was received (and accepted) for this year. He indicated that the management should go through constitution look at the criteria for the rewards and report back. Rodney Owen suggested we put it in the newsletter

12 HONORARIA

After some discussion it was decided by the meeting to increase the honorarium for the AJAS editor, Mike Coke, to R1500 per month.

13 BY-LAWS

Constitution and bye-laws needs update.

14 GENERAL

a. SACNASP

Wynand Vlok mentioned that, because of our effort during the past year to inform SACNASP about the composition and background of SASAqS members, he has received queries concerning the benefits of joining SACNASP. It was decided to request Johan Grobbelaar, who is a member of their executive to explain this to the meeting. Johan described what it entails and indicated that they can *inter alia*: evaluate and rate qualifications and evaluate modules. In addition he pointed out that over and above the fact that all practising scientists would soon have to register by law, the development of a code of conduct was on cards and that according to their disciplinary system four people had been successfully prosecuted in 2009. He also indicated that according to the change in categories at SACNASP a category for aquatic scientist had now been created.

b. Student subscription (Discussed under bullet 7)

c. Proceedings

Wynand Vlok indicated to the meeting that a request to have the presentations of this conference published as proceedings had been received. After discussion it was decided not to publish proceedings.

The meeting closed at 18h00.

Signed

PSO Fouché
Hon Secretary

Date

Accepted

President (W Vlok)

Date