



The
SPELEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL
LTD

wishes to announce amendments to its Memorandum and Articles of Association designed to eliminate all formal links with the Sydney University Speleological Society and to open membership to anyone willing to actively promote, support or assist speleology.

This most significant step is the first in a programme for the renovation of the Council's activities, with a new emphasis on the comprehensive scope and independence of its objects, as envisaged by the foundation members. A practical means of achieving these objects has occupied the attention of the Council's members for almost two years, and the advice of a number of prominent speleologists has been sought. We believe that the resulting proposals, now being implemented, form a sound, practical programme with the potential to benefit all speleologists.

In this pamphlet we want to explain the fundamental objects and revised membership structure of the Council, and introduce the proposed plans for reviving the finances.

past activities

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On 1st May, 1964 the Speleological Research Council Limited, a company limited by guarantee, association not for gain, was incorporated. Original capital and incentive for formation arose out of the production and sale of colour transparencies of tourist caves, by members of Sydney University Speleological Society since 1959. Grants totalling \$212 included one to Monash University for radio-carbon dating and description of a Nullarbor Thylacine skeleton and another in support of the Australian Star Mountains Expedition to New Guinea.

The New South Wales Government cancelled the contract for sale of colour transparencies at Jenolan Caves and subsequently called for tenders. The Council could not compete with professional commercial interests, and the Jenolan market was lost. Despite the set back, a theodolite was purchased for \$370 and made available for cave surveys.

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Further trading difficulties were experienced when Yarrangobilly Caves were closed. However, two grants amounting to \$209 were made; one to the South Australian Museum for maintenance of the Biospeleological collection and the other to underwrite the publication of the *SUSS Journal*. Many potentially profitable schemes were considered and it was generally agreed that the Council should enter the field of publication, if the necessary additional manpower could be found.

The Council published *Caves of the Nullarbor*, a collective work, edited by J. R. Dunkley and T. M. L. Wigley, reviewing speleological investigations in the Nullarbor Plain, and produced jointly by Sydney University Speleological Society and the Cave Exploration Group (South Australia).

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Yarrangobilly Caves were not re-opened according to schedule, so that negotiations concerning the re-introduction of trading were delayed. Sales at Wombeyan Caves were declining and it was evident that there was a trend towards postcards rather than transparencies.

For the first time the annual gross trading profit was nil, and apart from stocks on hand and current orders, sales at Wombeyan ceased. Lengthy negotiations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the supply of transparencies at Yarrangobilly were unsuccessful. The concept of publishing was revived and a subcommittee was appointed to investigate the prospects and review the role and structure of the Council generally. Because of uncertain plans, requests for grants by the University of Queensland and University of New South Wales Speleological Societies were, regrettably, unable to be approved.

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In essence the report on the future of the Council recommended that the membership be broadened, either by replacing the company by a Trust, or by amendment of the existing membership provisions; and that the Council concentrate its active business in the field of publications. Speleology could thus be assisted directly in two ways: firstly, by providing the capital to underwrite publication costs, thereby enabling publication of worthwhile work in a professional manner, and secondly, by means of such investments, to re-establish sufficient liquid assets to continue supporting research activities with direct grants.

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future policies

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In implementing the revised membership structure, the Council will be guided by a fundamental policy of *broadness with balance*. Thus we hope to include persons with both "professional" and "amateur" interests in speleology, persons engaged in scientific studies and those involved for sport or relaxation, and speleologists with no particular group affiliations as well as a balanced representation from the societies. Two purposes are thereby served: firstly, the Council will have available a fund of practical experience and accumulated "know-how", backed by sound professional knowledge and abilities, in a wide range of speleological and related activities. This valuable resource, united through a single body, will be more readily accessible and of benefit to all those who need it. Secondly the Council can provide a link between its members; thus benefiting their own interests in speleology and simultaneously--by integrating in one body the whole spectrum of speleological activities--broaden their outlook.

It should be clear that the Council is in no way competing with or overlapping the interests of the Australian Speleological Federation. That it has not done so in the past, and will not do so in the future is inherently due to the quite different objects of the two bodies. ASF has a large and difficult, but most important, job and its membership structure--a federation of groups--is that best suited to achieving its aims. In contrast, the Council, with the advantages of a commercial business, and a long term stability of individual membership, can fill a very different role--indeed, one which ASF by its nature could not effectively fill. There is no doubt that by suitable liason and cooperation both can benefit in the furtherance of their aims.

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In seven years, the Council has made available almost \$1000 in support of speleological projects. Of this, less than \$300 was provided for direct assistance of SUSS. Until the Council re-establishes a reliable income from publishing operations, direct grants must be limited to the very small annual surplus from interest on invested assets, after allowance for company overheads. The members are unwilling to grant any part of the accumulated funds without reasonable guarantee of return with at least normal interest.

The basic guiding policy with respect to publication operations will be that the Council should act as a *co-operative* publishing company, available for use by individual speleologists and societies. Thus the Council is offering financial backing, the advantages of a commercial business in the supply of materials and negotiation of contracts, and advice and assistance drawn from a common pool of experience and professional knowledge and skills. Those who make use of this service stand to benefit in several ways: the combination of adequate finance, sound technical support, and a wider market can yield a professionally finished, more commercial publication, with a resulting improvement in overall efficiency and ultimate financial gain. Naturally, in providing this service, the Council would anticipate some financial return, depending on the extent of the underwriting and degree of practical involvement in the production. In this respect, the common practice of negotiating an ordinary business contract will be followed. The Council is, by strict legal definition, a *non-profit* body: accumulated funds can be used only in furtherance of the objects, and hence, ultimately to benefit speleology by way of loan or direct grant. The members extend an invitation to all speleologists to support the future activities of the Council, and will be pleased to consider applications for assistance, from individuals or societies, particularly with respect to any projected publications or related projects.

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**formal statement
of objects and
membership
structure**

THE OBJECTS of the Speleological Research Council Limited are defined in clause two of the Memorandum of Association as follows:

- (i) *To explore and chart and organize and promote the exploration and charting of caves and cave systems.*
- (ii) *To promote support and assist in the scientific evaluation and investigation of caves and to foster speleology as a science and a sport.*
- (iii) *To promote and to assist in the promotion of speleology and speleological Societies and to assist such Societies with grants of money and otherwise.*

It is appropriate to note that these objects are exactly as drafted by the foundation officers of the Council in May, 1964. A fourth sub-clause, which contained the only reference to the Sydney University Speleological Society in the Memorandum, has been deleted. However, even this specific reference had been worded to preclude any limitation of the generality of the preceding objects.

MEMBERSHIP of the Council is regulated by the following relevant Articles:

2. *Those eligible for membership shall be any person who supports the objects of the Council as stated in clause two of the Memorandum of Association.*
5. *Every application for membership of the Council other than subscribers to the Memorandum of Association shall be proposed by at least four members of the Council. The application for membership shall be made in writing, signed by the applicant and by each of the four proposers.*
6. *At the next meeting of the Committee after the receipt of any application for membership such application shall be considered by the Committee which shall thereupon determine upon admission or rejection of the applicant. The Committee may require the proposers of an application to provide evidence of the eligibility of the applicant as defined in Article 2 of these regulations. In no case shall the Committee be required to give any reason for the rejection of an applicant.*

Several of the present members of the Council are proceeding to implement this revised membership structure. Personal invitations have been forwarded to a number of people active in speleology, with the express intention of developing an association with comprehensive and balanced interests. The Council therefore hopes to be able to announce, shortly, details of the revised membership and further plans for the recommencement of business activities.

EDWARD G. ANDERSON
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