



The Presidential Report

Once again the ANGFA National Conference has been and gone all too soon. A frantic weekend of meeting friends both old and new, all with the shared interest in native fishes and finding out more about this fascinating hobby of ours. I had a great time and I want to pay special tribute to the crew who organised it and in particular the dynamic duo —Andy Wattam and Scott Hunt. They did a fantastic job. The warmth of the occasion far out-weighed the effects of the weather that Canberra saved especially for the weekend.

The program was varied and interesting and all the speakers were of a high calibre. The organisers allowed more time for socialising between sessions and this was much appreciated. The venue functioned smoothly and professionally and complemented the rest of the conference. It was great to meet up with members from as far away as Perth, Adelaide, and Darwin who made the effort. So to all those who couldn't make it (for whatever reason) - "You missed a great conference!"

I suggest you plan now to allow the time to meet up with us all again in Melbourne in 2000. Details will be forthcoming regularly here and on our WebPages.

The AGM on Friday evening is an important part of each conference and gives the committee a chance to meet members and get some feedback. As there were no other nominations the current team were re-elected unopposed and I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to my fellow committee members who have again done a top job for the membership. The regional reports confirmed that the hobby of fish keeping, like many others, is having some difficulties but ANGFA in general is holding its own. The major focus of discussion was on the future of ANGFA's publications and it was natural that this should at times become somewhat of an emotional topic, as it is so dear to the hearts of many members.

There were less than 50 members present of the total 350 or so and it was clear that the majority were keen to ensure that the current format and content mix for "Fishes of Sahul" be maintained. The future role of the ANGFA Bulletin was not so clearly defined and it seemed to me that it was viewed as being in competition with the journal. The role seen for the Bulletin at this meeting was mainly one of club news, reprints, book reviews etc. There was the feeling expressed that if such material was included in the journal as a combined single publication that many members will no longer consider it worth keeping as a reference. Because the current management committee sees the current schedule of publications as unsustainable in the long term we feel that a combined publication, in colour, similar to the special Bulletin issued before this one is the answer.

Before we make any changes to either publication we need to find out from you, the membership, what it is that you perceive is the nature of ANGFA, what you consider yourself to be (as a member of ANGFA) and what you want in your publications. There will be a survey sheet accompanying this issue and I urge you to complete it and return it with your subscription for next year. Are you a fish-keeper who is also interested in native fish conservation and biology or do you see yourself only as being an aquatic "naturalist"? Are you a member of a regional group or affiliate of ANGFA or an aquarium society elsewhere? Do you feel our publications should include articles on general fish keeping for beginner aquarists? Or do you see that as the role of regional groups or other clubs? If so, what about those members who do not have access to local meetings? And how are we to attract juniors who are the future members if we expect them to already have advanced aquaristic skills?

We would like your answers to these questions, and others, preferably as soon as possible so we can see if any changes to our publications are indicated after the year 2000. Funds have already been allocated for publications next year to be similar to that of this year. We look forward to your participation.

..... *Bruce Hansen*