

President's Report

Dear members, it has been my privilege to serve you as President over the past four years, during which time we have seen consistent publication of our journal, regular conferences and seminars, and while weathering the COVID storm, introducing online webinars to meet the needs of members. During this time ANZMapS also joined the ranks of the International Cartographic Association, and are now regular contributors to its programs, Newsletters and other information gathering exercises.

This is my final year as President, as both the Society's four year rule and my own inner voice suggest it's time for change. Once again it is my pleasant duty to thank the outgoing committee for their service, and this year particularly to single out the efforts of outgoing Secretary Sarah Ryan, who will not be available for re-election. Many thanks Sarah for your good humour and calm organisation, once again keeping us on track in 2022/23.

Each year expressions of interest are sought for office holders and others willing to be on the Committee ex-officio. It is a valuable contribution made by seven or so members willing to give up an hour a month, or pitch in when needed to do some research or organise an event. Thanks all, and I hope others will join in to support the committee in coming years.

2022

Due to the Society's reporting cycle, the President's report last year covered all activity through till early September. The remainder of the year included a second issue of The Globe, and a webinar, organised by our Secretary, Sarah Ryan. The webinar, a showcase of student work "Making sense of place through personal connection to location", was presented on 21 Nov via Zoom. Many thanks Sarah and the participants.

2023

This year is a significant one for the Society in a number of ways. It is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Australian Map Curator's Circle (later the Australian Map Circle) in 1973, one of the two partner societies behind ANZMapS, the other being the New Zealand Map Society, founded in 1977. As in past years, this year two issues of the Globe are to be issued, with the first including a lost interview with founding AMC figure Tom Knight, also the National Library's inaugural map curator.

While the committee had also intended holding a conference commemorating the Society's 50 years, in collaboration with the ACT branch of the Surveying & Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI), our timing was off. At the end of 2022, SSSI and SIBA|GITA members voted to merge and form the new peak geospatial body Geospatial Council of Australia (GCA). ANZMapS was advised of the decision in January this year. Though this is doubtless advantageous to representing the interests of geospatial professional organisations and individuals, it resulted in the dissolution of SSSI branches, effectively ending plans already in train with the ACT SSSI.

As a result, in early 2023 the committee determined that it was too late to enter into discussions with potential partners, or to make necessary venue bookings and garner contributions a high-quality conference would require. This is undoubtedly a disappointment for us, particularly in this quinquagenarian year. However, it has given our society an opportunity to review our activities and aims. It had become clear previously that the Society faces challenges in maintaining membership numbers, and more recently, in garnering content for The Globe and producing conference events. With several key committee positions becoming vacant this year, the committee decided to consult the members on future direction, and held a Special General Meeting via Zoom on 25 May.

The SGM was well attended (34 attendees), and endorsed the committee's decision to review its activities. The meeting aired a number of concerns around the *Globe*, and the difficulties facing the Society in fulfilling both programs and member renewal. Given the changed environment in the spatial industry and institutions, should the Society's program comprising an annual conference be maintained, or might shorter less formal events (online or in person) be more achievable?

In addition to this operational question, the combination of stable though not expanding membership, and increasing expenses associated with publishing *The Globe* and running the Society, will over time present an inevitable challenge to our financial position. In terms of the *Globe*, last year the Committee approached several respected book and map dealers to consider advertising in the journal. However, this has not resulted as yet in significant advertising or sponsorship. Going digital is one avenue, though expense is not the only problem facing the journal. The Editor has experienced some difficulties in filling recent numbers, and in locating individuals to referee papers. In my view it is clear that continuing without an editorial committee will only see these challenges intensify.

While *The Globe* has thanks to the Editor's efforts nonetheless continued uninterrupted, Newsletters have been irregular over the past few years. We were fortunate to have a student from RMIT's school of Geospatial Science edit the newsletter in 2021/22, but commitments prevented her continuing in the role, so a replacement is sought if we are to issue future Newsletters.

In addition to and related to these operational matters, committee renewal has been of particular concern, with the potential for some roles not being filled, due in part to the current Constitutional limitation on tenure, of four years. As a result, the following motion has been devised and circulated to the membership, for consideration at the AGM:

Motion: That section 18(2) of the ANZMapS Constitution be amended to read '(2) The office bearers of the Society are the President, Vice President, Secretary and Business Manager. No member shall hold the same office bearer position for more than six consecutive years.'

It is hoped that with the assent of those present, a smooth transition to a new committee will be achieved at the meeting. Longer term, further Constitutional change may be needed, to ensure the smooth running and evolution of the Society.

As mentioned above, ANZMapS became an Affiliate member of the International Cartographic Society (ICA) in 2019, contributing content to National representatives, the Mapping Sciences Institute, Australia, and the New Zealand cartographic Society. In August, your President provided a four-year summary report of activities, presented by the Australian representative to the 19th General Assembly of the International Cartographic Association (ICA) in Cape Town, South Africa.

Before closing, I must also take this opportunity to note the passing of two of the Society's notable members, one of long standing, the other of recent but significant contribution. On 2nd March this year, Frank Urban died, aged 92. Frank was at one time Director of the Central Mapping Authority in Bathurst (NSW). He retired to Comboyne and then Port Macquarie (NSW), where he taught at U3A, and was a founding member, committee member and most recently patron of the Port Writers Inc.

A regular identity at AMC and ANZMapS conferences over the years, Frank authored a number of articles in The Globe, in addition to books, both fiction and nonfiction. His self-published autobiography, "Mapmaker: life and spice in Africa, Europe, Australia and Asia" was released in 2008. Widely liked within and outside ANZMapS, valé Frank.

In August we were saddened to hear of the death in a road accident of Igor Drecki and his wife Iwona, while on holiday. This was a real shock for our New Zealand friends especially those in the NZ Cartographic Society for which Igor was a mainstay, and in the International Cartographic Association. As many in our own Society will know, Igor was instrumental in developing a number of joint conferences with ANZMapS, and in supporting our application as an affiliate member of the ICA. A good friend lost.

Once again I thank the committee for their service, and wish the incoming committee well in pursuing its agenda in 2023/24.

Martin Woods,

31 August, 2023