**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Australasian Mycological Society**

**28th November 2024**

**Present** (via Zoom): Jonathan Plett (President), Anna Hopkins (Vice President), Camille Truong (Secretary), Jordan Bailey (Treasurer), Johanna Wong (Councillor), Mahajabeen Padamsee (Councillor), David Catcheside, Pam Catcheside, Tracey Steinrucken, Sarah Sapsford, Melvin Xu

**Apologies**: Tom May, Emily McIntyre (Australian Student Representative), Brian Menger (New Zealand Student Representative)

1. **12:00 PM Welcome and Introduction**

Jonathan Plett and Mahajabeen Padamsee welcomed the audience to the AGM.

Jonathan outlined the AGM agenda.

2. **12:10 PM** **Minutes of the 2023 AGM**

Jonathan Plett moved the acceptance of the Minutes of the 2023 AGM and Tracey Steinrucken seconded this motion. All voted in acceptance of these Minutes with no changes.

3. **12:15 PM** **President’s report and summary of 2024**

Jonathan Plett took over as president of the AMS from Tracey Steinrucken in January 2023.

Jonathan thanked all meeting attendees for supporting the AMS.

Jonathan presented the president’s report to the meeting.

**Coordinating with mycological societies and conferences**

The AMS continues to coordinate with international mycological societies and conference organisations.

* IMC workshop
  + The outcome from this workshop is that the AMS will work with other groups to share seminar speakers and newsletter content.
* ESA (December 2024)
* International Conference on Mycorrhiza
* ICPP2028

**Ecological Society of Australia (ESA)**

The AMS has partnered with the ESA to hold an AMS symposium at ESA 2024. The AMS has invited several speakers in addition to submitted talks within the theme “Fundamental and applied mycology: a global nexus for cross-kingdom interactions”.

Camille Truong organised to hold a special screening of “Follow the Rain”, a documentary by Stephen Axford and Catherine Marciniak, at ESA. Camille noted than over 150 people had registered to attend the documentary screening. The AMS will introduce the screening, which will be an excellent opportunity to share information about the AMS and potentially attract new members.

**13th International Conference on Mycorrhiza (ICOM13)**

ICOM13 will be held in Cairns from 13th-17th of July, 2026. A number of AMS council members are on the organising committee for the conference.

**2026 AMS Meeting**

2026 will be our next AMS meeting following the 2024 meeting at ESA. Next year, the AMS will need to establish an organising committee for our 2026 meeting.

**Social media**

The AMS has social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube, along with our website. Jonathan extended gratitude to members who have worked to keep the social media accounts updated. Camille would like to reach out to the AMS community to find members who are interested in assisting keeping the AMS website updated. Jonathan encouraged members to express their interest in helping with website maintenance or in providing content. Members are encouraged to share their work, publications and events for the AMS to feature on our social media channels.

**Virtual Seminar Series**

We have been continuing our Virtual Seminar Series over the past year. We had 9 speakers during 2024. Most seminars have been uploaded to the AMS YouTube channel, with the remaining few to be uploaded in the next few weeks.

**AMS Research Grants**

One of the ways the AMS gives back to the mycology community is by awarding research grants to students and early career researchers. Jonathan congratulated Eric Asare (Edith Cowan University) and Ramalka Kaslge (Western Sydney University) for receiving the 2024 AMS research grants. He highlighted that the AMS received a number of strong grant applications this year.

**AMS Conference Support**

This year we were able to support the attendance of 5 invited speakers for the AMS symposium at the ESA: Sally Fryar, Sarah Sapsford, John Ramana, Emily McIntyre, and Rebecca Quah.

**Daniel McAlpine Medalists**

The Daniel McAlpine Medal is awarded at every International Mycological Congress. As members of the International Mycological Society, the AMS was able to nominate researchers for the award. This year, two awards were available. Congratulations to Camille Truong and Johanna Wong-Bajracharya for receiving these awards.

**Looking Towards 2025**

* We will continue with our Virtual Seminars, which have proven very successful, with many members joining the live Virtual Seminars and many more watching the recordings on YouTube. Please contact us if you would like to hear from a particular researcher at a Virtual Seminar, as we still have some slots available for speakers next year. Members are also invited to host a Virtual Seminar if they are interested.
* We are also looking for contributions to our Newsletter, Website, and Merchandise Store. Please get in touch if you are a member with research, news, events, or job opportunities to share.
* In 2025 we will continue supporting researchers through AMS Research Grants and Student Travel Grants.
* We will soon be designing our 2025 member pins. Please get in touch if you have any suggestions about the 2025 design.
* Next year, we will be establishing a committee to organise the 2026 AMS symposium in New Zealand.

Jonathan expressed his thanks to the AMS Council for their contributions this year.

4. **12:20 PM Financial report**

Jordan Bailey presented the financial report to the meeting.

The memberships for 2024 is as follows:

* Current members: 125 (124 for 2023)
* 3 year memberships include 17 concessional, 27 full, and 3 lab memberships
* 1 year memberships include 11 concessional, 30 full, and 2 lab memberships
* There are 2 sustaining members, Elaine Davison and Philip Jacobson.

The AMS financials have been reviewed by Accountant Gabi Buckley MIPA, ASA JP (Qual). This year, new changes mean that we no longer need to submit this report each financial year. The financial report still requires a signature and a witness signature from this AGM. Tracey Steinrucken volunteered to sign the report as a witness.

Our total income from 2024 is $10,248. This is over $2000 more than in 2023, due to additional funds received from the 2023 Biosystematics Conference. At the end of 2023-24 financial year, the AMS bank account was sitting at $22,135. Jordan noted that some figures in the financial report will need to be amended as the accountant had allocated them to incorrect categories.

Jordan sends reminder emails when memberships are due for renewal. If members have a multi year membership, they receive an email stating the number of years they have left on their membership, to avoid receiving duplicate payments.

5. **12:30 PM Education Sub-Committee Report**

**Fungal Education Sub-Committee Report**

Sarah Sapsford presented the Education Subcommittee report to the meeting.

The Education Subcommittee met once this year to identify key priorities to focus on. This includes:

* Developing more educational videos, including training videos, laboratory demonstrations, and content showcasing fungi in different industries. Catherine suggested creating a standardised video style guide to assist in the production of these videos. This has not yet been finalised.
* Exploring opportunities to establish consistency in mycology courses across institutions.

The subcommittee goal for the beginning of 2025 is to produce a style guide for videos and begin collating videos that can be shared on the AMS website.

The subcommittee has updated the list of mycology courses available in Australia and New Zealand, which is now updated on the AMS website.

Sarah also confirmed that any student inquiries regarding education sent to AMS can be forwarded to the Education Subcommittee.

**Fungal Conservation Sub-Committee Report**

Camille Truong presented the Fungal Conservation Subcommittee report to the meeting. This report was prepared by Tom May (Royal Botanic Gardens of Victoria) and Peter Buchanan (Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research).

The Fungal Conservation Subcommittee operates as a Google Group to connect members and others with an interest in fungal conservation. On the AMS website, there is a page that lists species from Oceania that have been assessed for the IUCN Red List. The table has now been updated to include 84 species, of which 39 are native to Australasia and considered threatened. Among these, 3 are assessed as critically endangered and 18 as endangered.

At the international level, the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16) was held in Cali, Columbia in October 2024. At COP 16, mycologists distributed a document about the contribution of fungi to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). This document is available on the Fungal Conservation Subcommittee google drive. The GBF sets out a pathway to achieving the vision of a world living with harmony with nature by 2050. Contribution of fungi to the GBF demonstrates the importance of fungi for achieving the GBF targets. It aims to encourage countries meeting GBF goals and targets to integrate fungi into their conservation goals and actions.

Another mycological initiative at COP16 was a presentation of a pledge to recognise fungi as an independent kingdom of life in national and international legislation. The pledge calls for greater emphasis on fungi within the Convention on Biological Diversity. While the pledge has been supported by over a dozen countries, Australia and New Zealand have not yet signed on. FungiMap will be coordinating efforts to encourage the government of Australia to sign on to the pledge and will be contacting other organisations like the AMS for their support and advocacy.

Jonathan agreed that the council would discuss the pledge at the next council meeting.

6. **12:35 PM** **Election of Office Bearers for 2024**

Jonathan Plett presided over the election of office bearers for 2025.

Changes to council positions include:

* Camille Truong will take on the secretary role while Johanna Wong will step into the councillor role.
* Jonathan thanked Fionnuala Bulman for her time as the New Zealand Student Representative, and welcomed Brian Menger into the role.

Council nominations:

* President: Jonathan Plett (continuing)
* Vice President: Anna Hopkins (continuing)
* Treasurer: Jordan Bailey (continuing)
* Secretary: Camille Truong (nomination)
* Councillor 1: Johanna Wong (nomination)
* Councillor 2: Mahajabeen Padamsee (continuing)
* Australian Student Representative: Emily McIntyre (continuing)
* New Zealand Student Representative: Brian Menger (nomination)

7. **12:40 PM** **Other business**

Camille Truong presented the Taxonomy Australia report on behalf of Tom May (Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria).

Taxonomy Australia is the peak body for taxonomy in Australia, created as part the implementation of the decadal plan for taxonomy and biosystematics in Australian and New Zealand (2018-2028). Tom represents the AMS on the Taxonomy Australia steering committee, which meets four times a year.

Taxonomy Australia publishes the Australian Journal of Taxonomy, which is a venue for rapid publication of new taxa and updates to taxonomy across all organisms. So far, the Australian Journal of Taxonomy has published 78 papers on various groups, including a number of papers on fungi.

Taxonomy Australia is currently developing an advocacy strategy focused on a mission to describe all the biota of Australia within 25 years. Key components of this mission are a call for an uplift in annual grant funding distributed by the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS) from $2 million to $20 million, as well as the completion of the Australian National Species List (NSL). Taxonomy Australia is currently liaising with organisations represented on the steering committee to garner support. Tom recommends that the AMS confirms support for this mission.

Jonathan acknowledged the importance of this initiative and indicated that the AMS Council would discuss the proposal at their next council meeting.

David Catcheside, speaking on behalf of AMS members, thanked Jonathan and the council for their management of the AMS.

Jonathan Plett thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions. He encouraged members to contact the AMS with any ideas or initiatives, emphasising that the AMS is always looking to support new ideas.

The 2024 AGM concluded at 12:43 PM AEDT.