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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN – Allan Rae

Our 51st annual conference has now come and gone. It was another great occasion – wonderful weather, venue, program and management. My thanks go to Merylyn, Shanna and the rest of the AOM team who continue to run our conferences in a very efficient and professional management. They will remain our preferred conference organiser for the next three years. Thanks also to Ross Cullen and his local organising committee for all their hard work, a great contributed-papers program, two useful pre-conference workshops and very enjoyable social events – thanks also to Ross who is standing down from Council this year. We expressed our sympathy to Ross and his family after his father passed away shortly before the conference began. As a result, Ross was not able to fully enjoy the fruits of his labours at the conference. I also extend my thanks to those who gave invited papers, as well as to all other presenters. We congratulate Caroline Tanner and Phil Pardey who became Distinguished Fellows of AARES, and the various prize-winners.

Thanks also to our sponsors, without whom our conferences – in their present shape anyway – would not be sustainable. The Premier Sponsor was ABARE/DAFF, AGMARDT was a Speaker Sponsor, Principal sponsors were the Productivity Commission, the RIRDC, Lincoln University, Massey University, Waikato Management School, New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries, New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, CSIRO was a Lunch Sponsor, Associate Sponsors were the New Zealand Treasury and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, and other sponsors were the ANU Crawford School of Economics and Government, New Zealand Landcare Research and MOTU.

Phil Pardey gave a presentation to the conference on the successful uploading to AgEcon Search of all our earlier AJAE articles, with the RMAE papers almost complete also I believe. This will greatly increase the exposure of our Society's work to the international community. All 2007 conference papers will also be loaded to this site. Thanks again to the team who gave a lot of time to this endeavour.

Our next conference is in Canberra and Herb Plunkett heads up the local organising committee. Should be another great gathering, with Rockhampton likely to follow in 2009.

I welcome Chris O'Donnell as President-Elect of AARES. I am sure Chris is well known to most of you. He is already busy working as Chair of the Publications Working Party, on our new contract with Blackwells, and will also be responsible for the invited speakers program next year in Canberra. I also would like to thank John Mullen for leading our Society so well over the past year. Thanks also to other members of Council and the executive, and Annie Hurst who runs our central office at ANU. Thanks also to those who gave of their time last year serving on various awards and prize giving committees, and to those serving our Branches. Thanks go to Geraldine Gentle for her work as Manager, Promotion and Development. Geraldine has recently resigned from this position, and we are now advertising for nominations.

You are probably aware that our journal publishers, Blackwell, have merged with Wiley as from last February. We have been assured that it will be 'business as usual' for our Society – editorial office coordinators and journal publishing managers will continue to be located in Melbourne. Wiley and Blackwell are working on how best to integrate their systems for subscription management and online platforms. However 2008 subscription renewals will continue as normal from the Blackwell system and separate online platforms are likely to continue until the end of 2008.

AJARE Editors' Report (report to AGM Feb 2007)

New Editors

The AARES Council has accepted a recommendation for a new editorial team based at the Australian National University: Jeff Bennett, Tom Kompas and Quentin Grafton. The new editors are listed at http://www.aares.info/office_bearers and http://www.aares.info/office_bearers#Editors.

Preliminary discussions are underway between the old and new editorial teams about transition arrangements for early 2007 regarding the management of existing and new submissions to AJARE. The new editors will be responsible for Volumes 52 – 54.

State of the Journal

The flow of submissions is continuing at a favourable rate. In 2005 the journal received 120 submissions and in 2006 125 submissions were received. Compared with earlier years (see attached table) AJARE is receiving an enhanced number of submissions. We realise that this places increased demands on reviewers and associate editors and the AJARE editors are genuinely thankful for the support they continue to provide.

The following summary statistics from January 2007 were generated by the Manuscript Central web site.

Manuscript Type

- 18 Book Review
- 2 Notes
- 327 Original Article
- 16 Original Policy Forum Paper
- 9 Original Review
- 14 Special Issue

Journal Statistics

80 Average time (days) from submission to first decision

7 Average Editor turn around time (days) YTD.

55:326 (17%) Accept Ratio

In June 2006 the 2005 impact factors of all journals were released and showed AJARE's impact factor had more than doubled, rising 117% to 0.867, up from 0.4 in 2004. In addition, the journal raised its rank in the *economics* subject category from 117/172 to 54/117. In the *agricultural economics and policy* category, the journal moved from 6/8 to 3/9, and was only 5 ranks below the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* in the general *economics* category.

The 2005 impact factor data is based on cites to articles published in 2003 and 2004 (Chris O'Donnell and John Mullen were AJARE editors then) and it has been noted that AJARE's impact factor has fluctuated over the last few years. Apparently this is normal, and not a cause for concern. What is clear is that AJARE's impact factor is generally increasing over time (see attached chart) and the 2005 impact factor represents the journal's highest ever impact factor.

In September 2006 Thomson Scientific (ISI) announced its acquisition of ScholarOne which provides the electronic editorial office system (Manuscript Central) adopted by AARES for the electronic management of AJARE. Later in November 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd and John Wiley & Sons Inc announced their planned merger of both companies. These commercial changes are unlikely to affect AJARE in the short term. The long run implications are less clear. However, greater concentration in the publishing is a common trend.

Issue 3 of Volume 50 was a bumper special issue on "Economic and Policy Aspects of Water Resources". In addition to tributes to the 2006 Distinguished Fellows, it contained 8 original articles, 3 Policy Forum papers, and 2 book reviews. Because the first three issues of volume 50 used up 474 pages of the budgeted 560 pages for volume 50, issue 4 was slimmer, containing only 5 articles and 4 book reviews. In addition, by late January 2007, there are already 6 papers, one note, and 5 book reviews accepted for volume 51, and there are a further 37 papers and one book review in the current workflow. It is likely that we will have accepted enough copy to fill volume 51 before mid year.

Following the successful 2006 IAAE Gold Coast conference, the editors of AJARE tabled a proposal at the September meeting of the Federal Council of AARES for a Special Issue of AJARE on "Developing Country Issues and Applications". This proposal was developed jointly with K. Otsuka, K.P. Kalirajan, and Tom Kompas, to provide an outlet for papers presented at the 2006 IAAE Gold Coast conference, as well as papers submitted in response to a general call for papers on the above theme. The issue would reflect AARES' interest in facilitating growth of the agricultural and resource economics discipline in developing countries.

After discussion, the Federal Council of AARES decided not to proceed with such a special issue, and instead issued a general invitation to all authors of papers presented at IAAE 2006 to consider submitting their papers to AJARE. All such manuscripts will be reviewed in the normal manner, and published in a normal issue of AJARE, rather than in a special issue, if they meet AJARE standards.

Important Thanks

The editorial team would like to formally acknowledge the unsung work of associate editors Julian Alston, Tom Kompas, Donald McLaren and Ray Trewin; Book editor John Rolfe; the AJARE Editorial Board and the more than 110 reviewers (listed on p 567 of AJARE 50(4)) who help maintain AJARE's professional standing.

Bob Lindner, Ross Kingwell, David Pannell,
Editors: Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics
February, 2007

From the new editors

Tom Kompas, Jeff Bennett and R. Quentin Grafton from the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University are the new Editors of AJARE. They started handling new submissions in March, and will be responsible for volumes 52 to 54 of the Journal. Along with John Rolfe (Central Queensland Univ), continuing as the book review editor, they are joined by a first-rate team of Associate Editors who will assist with the review process: Colin Brown (Univ of Queensland), Diane Dupont (Brock University, Canada), Iain Fraser (Imperial College, London), Lata Gangadharan (Univ of Melbourne), Kaliappa Kalirajan (Graduate Institute for Policy Studies and Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development, Tokyo), and Kurt Schwabe (Univ of California Riverside).

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DEADLINE AND ADVERTISING

The deadline for receipt of any items for inclusion in the next edition of AARES News & Views is 15 July 2007. Please send items to Richard Reeve reever01@student.uwa.edu.au

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