A stylized illustration in shades of teal and yellow. At the top, a sunburst pattern of radiating lines emanates from a central point. Below the sunburst, three dolphins are depicted in mid-leap, moving from left to right. The dolphins are rendered in a simplified, graphic style. Below the dolphins are stylized waves, represented by curved, layered bands of teal and yellow. The overall composition is dynamic and celebratory.

# THE EARLY YEARS

In 1984 **Jim Thomson** took it upon himself to write a short history on the formation, and early years, of the Australian Marine Sciences Association. What he uncovered is a unique story of an association born out frustration with the status quo. From a small group of 43 people in 1962, AMSA has grown to be the authoritative voice of Australian Marine Science. We happily reprint {most of} Jim's essay for all to enjoy!

Our Association might never have been formed, or at least not constituted as early as it was, had it not been for the refusal of the Ecological Society of Australia to include a marine section in their forthcoming conference in 1962. This so incensed the marine biologists present when the matter was debated that they called a meeting of interested persons and a formative meeting of 43 people met in August 1962 to adopt a resolution to form an Australian Association of Marine Scientists.

An interim committee was set up to draft a constitution and to arrange an inaugural meeting. Those present agreed that those persons who joined the Association by the date of the inaugural meeting should be regarded as Foundation Members.

The interim committee consisted of:

- Chairman: Dr Geoffrey Kesteven
- Secretary: Dr Jim Thomson
- Treasurer: Dr John Yaldwyn
- Members: Professor Bill Stephenson and Miss Isobel Bennett

The Inaugural Meeting was held at the CSIRO laboratories, Cronulla, on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> 1963 and set the pattern for future meetings by associating with it a program of presented scientific papers. Although by no means all were able to be present on that historic occasion, the Association had 130 Foundation Members, including four overseas members. Dr (later Sir) Frederick Russell, then Director of the Plymouth Marine Laboratory; Dr John Gulland of the Fisheries Laboratory, Lowestoft (later of FAO); Professor V.J. Chapman, University of Auckland, and Professor George Knox, Canterbury University.

The meeting adopted a constitution of some 16 clauses and elected the first Council of the Association: President: Dr Geoffrey Kesteven Vice-President: Prof. Bill Stephenson Secretary: Dr Jim Thomson Treasurer: Dr John Yaldwyn Councillors: Mrs Hope Macpherson, Dr Ernest Hodgkein, and Dr Brian Womersley.

That first meeting decided to hold AMSA annual general meetings in association with ANZAAS congresses because ANZAAS attracted greater numbers of scientists than any other occasion. An exception was to be made when ANZAAS was held in New Zealand.

Many people have given time to the affairs of the Association over the years, but the members partic-

ularly owe debts of gratitude to those who have organised the remarkably successful series of conferences. The formal work of the Association falls on all members of the Council but particularly on the officers who are President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The first few Councils of AMSA concentrated on building up the membership because it was considered that neither governments nor influential scientific bodies would give credence to our representations until we could rightfully claim to represent the views of the majority of Australian marine scientists. From the start marine biologists have dominated the membership which is quite understandable because there are more of them than any other category of marine scientist in Australia. Nevertheless there was a conscious effort in the early years of the Association to ensure that the conference programs included items of interest to geologists and oceanographers.

When the Australian Society for Limnology started up, AMSA did suggest that the two bodies might amalgamate as aquatic science was a common bond, but the idea did not appeal to the limnologists, who might well have feared being swamped by the larger number of marine scientists. At the inaugural meeting of the Association the members present expressed the wish that AMSA should consist, predominantly, of persons active in research, but persons in positions to influence marine research were to be admitted by consent of the Council. Originally there were four classes of membership: Ordinary, Student, Institutional and Honorary Life. A fourth group, Sustaining Members, were added some years later in a search for increased support from industry.

Honorary Life Membership is in recognition of distinguished marine research or for meritorious service to the Association. The only such award made by AMSA has been to Elizabeth Pope, who was editor of the Newsletter between 1965 and 1968.

## Meetings

The inaugural meeting was planned to be a one-day affair, but so many papers were offered that it was expanded to two days setting the pattern for some years ahead. In more recent years the meetings have expanded to three days, following complaints from members that insufficient time was available for discussion in the two-day format as more and more members took the opportunity to present papers. Meetings have been held in many interesting spots [see 'Our Modern History', this issue, for a full list of conference locations. ed.]



Some years before the Tutukaka meeting the New Zealand Association invited our members to join in their meeting at Kaikoura, before ANZAAS met in Christchurch. In the event only six members managed to attend the interesting meeting in a beautiful township.

### AMSA publications

The AMSA Newsletter, later the Bulletin, was the first publication produced by the Association even before the inaugural meeting by request of those members attending the formative meeting. It was intended to keep members informed about activities in marine science in Australia.

The first number appeared in January, 1963. There were three issues in 1970 which were entitled simply "Australian Marine Science" but this did not find favour with the membership who settled however for the Australian Marine Sciences Bulletin. In response to concerns by some members a very early number of the Newsletter stated that this was not to be regarded as a "publication" for the purposes of the International Rules of Nomenclature; whether such a declaration has force has yet to be tested. After the first conference it became the practice to publish abstracts of the papers given.

One number was given over entirely to papers on a symposium on the concept of "niche" in the marine zone. Otherwise the Bulletin and Newsletter have been used to convey news of activities of individuals and of branches as well as reports from Council. The amount of material that appears in a number reflects the amount of time the editor has been able to devote

to its production, for, despite frequent appeals to the membership for material, the bulk of most numbers are written, or at least abstracted by the Editor.

The issue published in January 1979 was numbered No 64 + 65 to compensate for the late production of the bulletin that should have appeared in the last quarter of 1978.

The Seahorse motif appeared on the cover of the first Newsletter and except for three numbers in 1970 has appeared ever since, although the current version is slimmer than the pot-bellied variety that adorned the cover for the first six years. From time to time the Association has debated changing the Bulletin into a journal publishing quality research papers; but the majority of members have repeatedly taken the view that there are plenty of journals available for publication and that they want a Bulletin of the type the Association has.

The first ten issues of the Newsletter were sponsored by the CSIRO Division of Fisheries & Oceanography; after that the cost had to be borne by the members' subscriptions plus occasional advertising.

At the first Annual General Meeting, held in Canberra in January, 1964, the Association asked Brian Newell to prepare a leaflet "Careers in Marine Science". Illustrated by Robert Ingpen this pamphlet proved to be very popular. FAO took 3,000 copies to distribute in overseas countries. It has been reprinted several times. At the same meeting members expressed the view that a directory of Australian Marine Sciences was needed and the secretary of the time, Jim Thomson, offered to prepare it. It finally appeared in 1967 and a number of versions have followed.

The meeting also decided that the Association should publish a series of memoirs on the Australian marine fauna, some to be of the type of the LMBC Memoirs and others to be on Australian marine ecosystems.

At one stage the subcommittee handling publications had plans for 12 handbooks, but only three have ever appeared. Even if intending authors had produced the manuscripts it is doubtful whether the Association could have afforded to publish them. Despite financial help from a number of marine business firms the few Handbooks produced, particularly the second, put the Association's finances into a precarious position for a number of years.

- AMSA Handbook No. 1 was by Dr A.D. Albani "Recent Foraminiferida of the central coast of New South Wales", appearing in February 1968.
- AMSA Handbook No. 2 was by Dr M. Whitfield on "Ion selective electrodes for the analysis of natural waters"
- AMSA Handbook No. 3 was again by Dr Albani entitled - "Recent Foraminifera of New South Wales"

## The Branches

Between conferences the only links that the majority of members have with the Association are the Newsletter and the local branches. In the early days

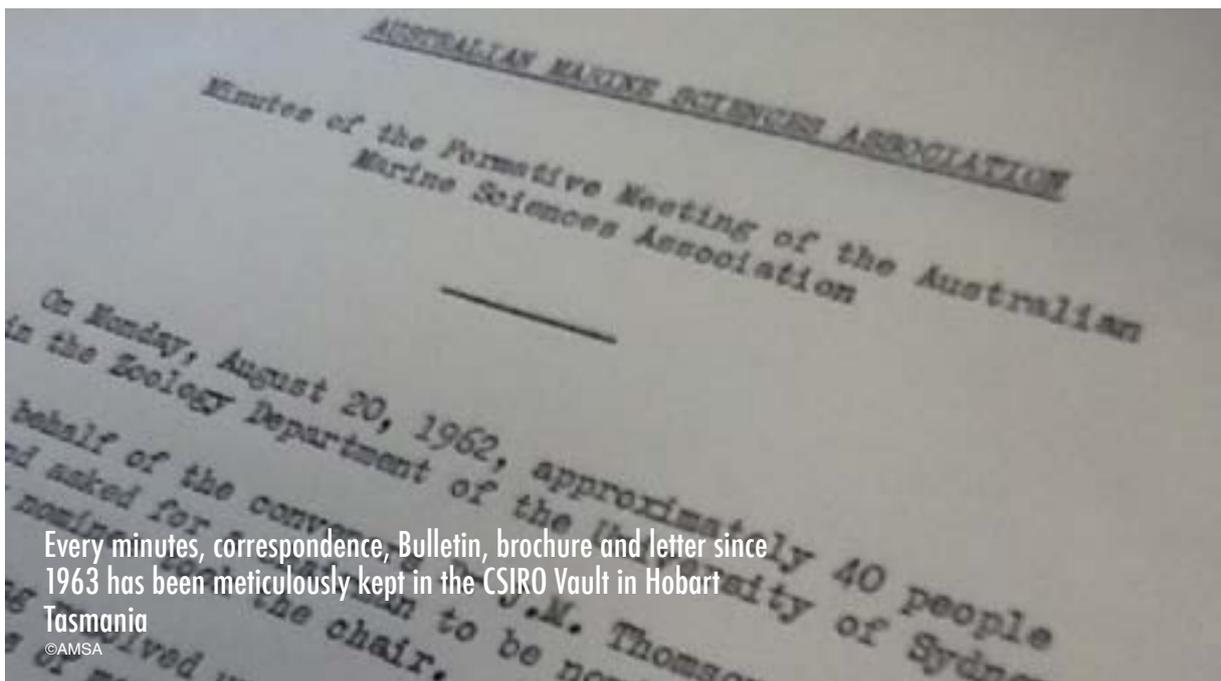
of the Association, the states had active branches, and Queensland soon had two, one in Brisbane and the other in Townsville. The success of a branch depended very much on the enthusiasm of those in office; interest has waxed and waned and some branches have been non-functional for various periods of time. Probably the Western Australian and South Australian branches have been more continuously active than the other branches. They have been particularly active in expressing their views on management in the marine zone. New South Wales had a period when coastal pollution and the need for marine parks were absorbing topics.

As happens with all organisations with a branch structure there have been occasional strains between Council and the branches, usually over the degree of freedom that branches might have to speak in the name of AMSA and whether Council should provide any funding for branches.

Whatever the level of activity of the branches one function they have all performed remarkably well, namely the organisation of the conferences which are the stimulus to continued membership. By the third annual general meeting, the Association was offering the Student's Prize for the best paper delivered at the conference by a student member, and a few years later the idea of the student travel awards came into being.

## Representing Marine Scientists

The Association's first attempt to influence an outside body was not conspicuously successful. Back



Every minutes, correspondence, Bulletin, brochure and letter since 1963 has been meticulously kept in the CSIRO Vault in Hobart

Tasmania

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in the 60's the only consolidated source of information about overseas conferences was a periodic circular issued by the office of the Academy of Science. Members of the Association complained at an annual general meeting that a good proportion of these meetings had already been held by the time the information reached them. Council suggested to the Academy ways to speed up the dissemination of the information. One gets the feeling from reading this old correspondence that the Academy regarded the AMSA Council as a group of young upstarts teaching their seniors to suck eggs and that the Council looked on the Academy as a group of senile scientists who seemed unable to comprehend AMSA's concern.

Although nothing much came of this first exchange it did draw our existence to the notice of the Academy and some years later, in 1971, the Academy invited AMSA to nominate a member to the Australian National Committee on Oceanography (ANCOR), an invitation was repeated in subsequent years.

The AMSA conference in Melbourne in 1970 was the first to attract a large number of people from industry and government departments with the associated symposium on Pollution. From that time on a number of industrial concerns and government agencies have encouraged members of their staff to attend AMSA conferences.

At the 1971 Annual General Meeting in Brisbane, concern was expressed at the lack of facilities for marine research in Australia, which stimulated Council to make the first of what were to be many approaches to government. The new President, Dr Frank Talbot, was requested to write to the Prime Minister on the subject, which he duly did. A reply was received from Doug Anthony as Acting Prime Minister. The nature of his reply suggested to Council that specific proposals were more likely to receive government attention than general complaints about the lack of facilities.

By 1973 Council was making the first of several proposals to the Minister for Science for the creation of a National Council for Marine Science, to involve the Academy, AMSA, universities, Industry, CSIRO and Commonwealth and state agencies. This has not yet been achieved despite support from elsewhere in the community but may have helped in the formation of AMSTAC at a later date. In 1974 the Council made a submission to OECD requesting an investigation into the needs of marine science in Australia. A section on this topic was included in the OECD report and the Minister of Science invited AMSA, among others, to a

meeting to discuss the recommendations.

The following year AMSA was invited to comment on the report of the Interim Council of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (the so-called Day Report). Later in the years members of Council met ASTEC and the Minister for Science to discuss the need to develop a national policy for marine science. That same year AMSA published guidelines for the development of underwater parks and reserves in Australia. Also by resolution of the previous Annual General Meeting working parties were set up to consider the Law of the Sea, the possible establishment of an Australian Tidal Institute, safety rules for SCUBA diving, the availability of research facilities, and the protection and management of estuaries and estuarine wetlands. In due course statements were published and sent to relevant government departments.

In 1977 the Council was invited to comment on proposals for the Great Barrier Reef Park. In 1979 Council wrote to the Prime Minister supporting the emphasis given to marine science in the recently published ASTEC report, particularly the proposal to set up AMSTAC. Later that same year a submission was made to the Senate Standing Committee which was studying marine science in Australia. Council also wrote to the Australian Biological Resources Survey urging attention to the Australian marine fauna and flora.

In 1981 AMSA joined with others in unsuccessfully seeking to have the laboratories at Cronulla, shortly to be evacuated by CSIRO, made into a national facility for marine science or at least as a regional laboratory. Also in that year representatives of AMSA participated in a meeting of non-governmental agencies arranged by the Australian National Commission for UNESCO to discuss future UNESCO plans.

In 1982 the Academy of Sciences invited AMSA to take part in a workshop to examine research in the history of science with a view to producing a bicentenary volume on Science in Australia. In 1983 Council commented on the draft Discussion Paper on the National Conservation Strategy for Australia, particularly drawing attention to the inadequate recognition of the needs to conserve marine environments and marine resources. AMSA was later represented at the national conference held in Canberra to discuss the revised draft. Also in 1983 AMSA was debating the performance of AMSTAC.

The Prime Minister was informed that AMSA

supported an accelerated rate of declaration of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and he was also told that AMSA agreed with the views of the Australian Academy of Science about the freedom of access to Australia for prominent scientists no matter what the political tensions between the homeland and Australia. Once more the Minister of Science was urged to develop a marine science and technology policy.

Such lobbying on behalf of marine science in Australia is a legitimate function of the Association. Some degree of tension is felt by government employees who may happen to be members of Council, but it is expected that they can be objective in considering the issues and it is to be hoped that their department heads also see it that way.

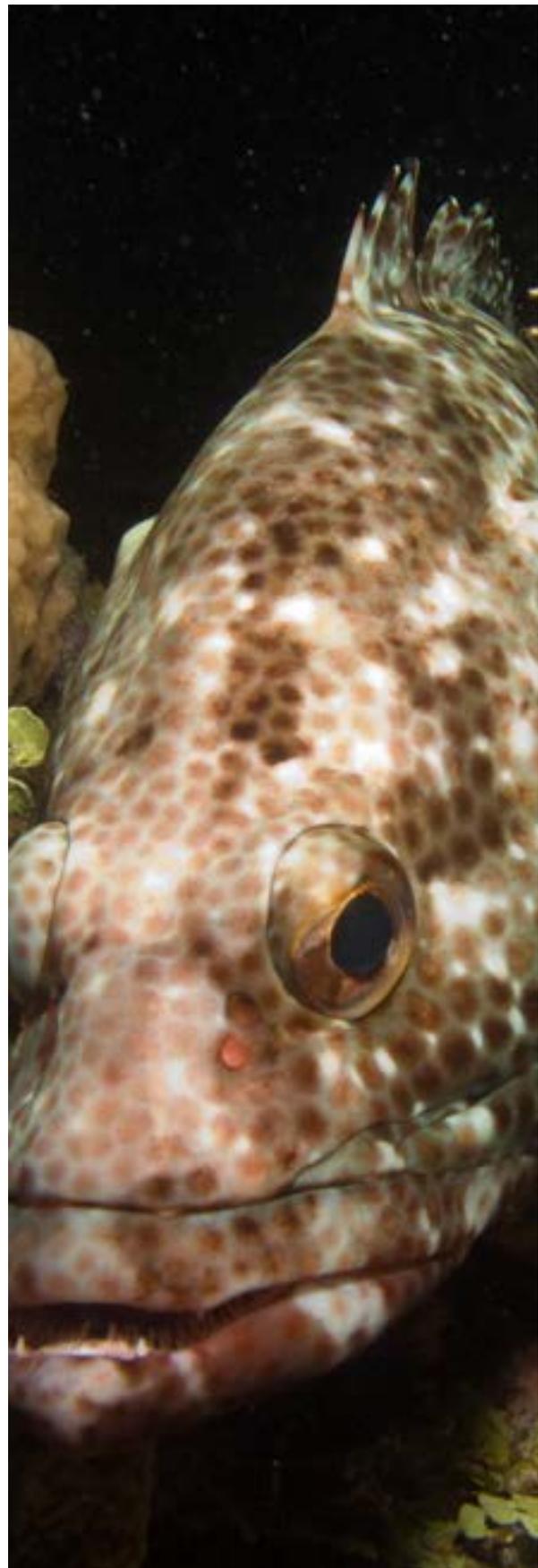
## Epilogue

The Association has been fortunate in the calibre of the members who have served it on Council. As a result of their actions AMSA is regarded as the legitimate voice of Australian Marine Scientists. We owe a great debt to the many who have spared their time to arrange the annual general meetings and associated conferences.

I look forward to the second twelve years of the Association with optimism. The first twelve have more than fulfilled the hopes of those 43 people who met in the formative meeting in 1963. ■



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