FIVE DECADES OF SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MARINE SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

Lynnath E. Beckley

Data sources
- Trawled through 190 Bulletins (Jan 1963 - June 2013)
- Held in various personal collections & libraries
- Constructed spread sheets of relevant information
- Analysed & collated into coherent story (hopefully!)
- Acknowledge help of librarians, photographers et al.

Origins of AMSA
- ESA conference (Sydney, August 1962): no marine session
- 43 dissidents met & resolved to form AMSA
- Interim committee formed, encouraged membership & drafted constitution
- Inaugural meeting of 130 Foundation Members at CSIR lab, Cronulla on Saturday, 18 May, 1963
- First AMSA Council elected:
  - Geoffrey Kesteven - NSW
  - Jim Thomson - NSW
  - John Yaldwyn - NSW
  - Hope McPherson - Vic
  - Ernest Hodgkin - WA
  - Bryan Womersley - SA
- AMSA subscriptions:
  - £1 - professional members & 10 shillings - students
  - Held first AMSA conference the next day!

Growth in membership
- Membership grew rapidly
- In 1965, the Treasurer reported that, of 159 members, 124 were in arrears!
- Reputedly, reached about 1,000 members in 1986
- Data more sparse in Bulletins of 1990s & 2000s
- Removal of non-financial members saw more realistic numbers in 2000s

Current membership

N = 1,028 members as at AGM 2012

40 year members

2002  Alberto Albani, Joe Baker, Isobel Bennett, Raymond Brown, Albert Caton, Alan Cribb, Don Fielder, Jack Greenwood, Bruce Hamon, George Humphrey, Scoreby Shepherd, Jim Thompson†, Jan Watson
2003  John Lucas, Bruce Phillips, Dave Pollard
2005  Ian Brown, Frank Talbot
2006  Rod Simpson, Alan Jones
2009  Rosetta Marsh, Ross Winstanley, Chris Smalley, Wolfgang Zeidler
2010  Ian Kirkgaard, Helen Marsh, Gary Poore
2011  Pat Hutchings
2012  Rob Day, Neville Exon, Ross Quinn
2013  Alan Butler, Penny Berends, Terry Dene, Bill McCormick, Richard Thompson

50+ year members!
AMSA affairs run by an annually elected national Council
- 24 Presidents, 22 Vice Presidents, 17 Secretaries, 11 Treasurers
- AMSA branches (constituent bodies) established early on to facilitate AMSA activities around Australia
- WA & Qld formed first branches in 1963
- State branch convenors first elected in 1965
- NT branch formed in 1984
- Physical oceanography branch (1985-2001)

Geoffrey Kesteven
Graduate of Sydney University
Population dynamics
CSIR Fisheries in Cronulla
FAO Singapore, Bangkok & Rome
Assistant Chief of CSIRO

Dr Joseph Baker
Graduate of JCU in chemistry
Roche Institute of Marine Pharmacology
AIMS – aquaculture & marine biodiscovery
ACT Commissioner of Environment
OA, OBE and many other accolades
Patron of AMSA since 2007

Dr Geoffrey Kesteven
Graduate of Sydney University
Population dynamics
CSIR Fisheries in Cronulla
FAO Singapore, Bangkok & Rome
Assistant Chief of CSIRO

“He was an ideas man and believed that science should be socially responsible”

Wendy Craik
Peter Rothlisberg
Craig Johnson
Alan Butler
John Keesing
Maria Byrne
John Sherwood
Gina Newton
Fred Wells
Anthony Boxshall
Lynnath Beckley
Sabine Dittrman

Bill Stephenson
Bryan Womersley
Ernest Hodgkin
C Wallington
K Radway Allen
John Noye
Meryl Williams

Lt Commander Ken Robin kept AMSA ship-shape for 7 years
- Chris Smalley served for 6 year term (constitution rewrite)

Jim Thompson
Ken Robin
Pat Dixon
Robert King
Peter Young
Stephen Brandt
Philip Gibbs
Di Walker
Helen Lew Ton
Stefica Andrejanic
Roland Pitcher
Judy O’Neil
Anne Breakley
Jon Havenand
Chris Smalley
Ian Field
Karen Miller

John Yaldwyn
Alan Carter
Des Griffin
Peter Roy
Rosa Allen (1975-1992)
Fred Wells*
Ron Gough
Mary Spehr
Andrea Mayfield
Narelle Hall (1999-2010)
Craig Styan

*Paid assistant to handle membership since 1993
AMSA's principal communication method
- AMSA Bulletin
- 190 Bulletins
- 16 Editors
- Ron Kenny longest serving editor (1978-1986)
- Narelle Hall assisted with layout for many years
- pdf version since mid-2000s
- Electronic since Dec 2012

Communication
- 1965 - Directory of marine scientists
- Careers in Marine Science
    - (10,000 copies) & 2002
  - 2007 CMS on website
- Three AMSA handbooks in 1960s
  - "We realise, all too late, unfortunately, that the publishing of books, most particularly those of an erudite technical nature, is a highly specialised trade, and the members of our Association concerned, however well meaning, are unqualified for the task!"

Website
- 1997 AMSA website transferred from UTS to UQ (Narelle Hall)
- 2002 AMSA website transferred to amsa.asn.au (with membership database)
- 2012 - 2013 Major website redevelopment
- AMSA list available since 2003
- Go to Meeting software bought for Council meetings 2013
- Social media Facebook, Twitter etc

Conferences
- 48 conferences - local organising committees delegated by AMSA Council
- Linked with ANZAS conference until 1983
- Some joint conferences with NZMSS, ACRS, ISWS etc.
- Initially free but fees introduced from 1972
  - $200 cost of wine, ale & sherry in Melbourne in 1970?
- All states
- Venues initially small, fun places (Eaglehawk Neck, Rottnest & Kangaroo Islands)
- Then, universities, conference centres & now casinos!
- Broome?

First AMSA conference
- 19 May 1963, Cronulla

Speaker | Title of presentation
---------|------------------------
G.F. Humphrey | The CSIRO Division of Fisheries & Oceanography
H.B. Wisely | Fouling tests & rearing of pelagic larvae
D.J. Tranter | Zooplankton abundance in Australian waters
B.V. Hamon | The Eastern Australian Current
D. Vaux | Fisheries hydrology in SE Australia
J.P. Robins | Water type preferences of tuna
G.L. Kesteven | Marine stock assessment
J.M. Thompson | Counting salmon
W.G.H. Maxwell | Review of marine geological research in Australia
H.B.S. Womersley | Review of marine botanical research in Australia
Morning: Annual General Meeting
Afternoon: Six talks
"The members then adjourned for dinner and to fortify themselves for the evening session..."
"In the evening, after the presidential address introduced an unexpectedly sober note (by contrast with the informal hilarity of the dinner), Professor Webb gave a most informative talk, illustrated by maps and charts, on the relationships between the atmosphere and oceanic circulation."
"By this time your reporter was suffering from writer’s cramp (or some other disability) and forgot to take notes!"

Conference activities
1965 - Excursion to Port Arthur in steady rain!
1966 - Brisbane excursion - trawling in Moreton Bay
"Isobel Bennett expertly fried mufle fillets"
1980 - Glenelg - Barossa wine tour
1999 - Melbourne - Mornington wine tour & AFL matches
2000 - Sydney - Hunter Valley wine tour & fun run!
2013 Whales & glow worms!

Awards
Jubilee Award for excellence in marine science (22 since 1988)
Technical Award (3 since 2009)
Allen Award (student international travel)
Bequest from K. Radway Allen
Ron Kenny Awards (student oral & poster)
Trust fund established by AMSA
Peter Holloway Award (student oceanography)
Proliferation of other student prizes
Sherwood award
Melbourne 2000 - Pearly Shells Big Band
John Sherwood doing the Serpentine shuffle
1980s: Fully fledged
- Many AMSA submissions
  - Senate enquiries (marine science, national parks)
  - AMSA recommendations to ABRS on taxonomy
  - Investigations into needs of marine science
  - Funding through AMSTAC, then ARC
- AMSA reps on many government committees
  - ANCOR, Antarctic research, Environment, SF17 diving standards
- FASTS starts - 56 societies join
- AMSA representative of aquatic cluster (1986)
- AMSA tries to strengthen contacts among various societies (ACRS, ASPAB, ASFB, AMOS, ASL)

1990s: Steaming ahead
- Major AMSA position statements and policies
  - Marine & Estuarine Protected Areas (1991)
  - Towards a Marine Science & Technology Policy for Australia
    - Launched 13 July 1997 in Canberra & Hobart
- Many AMSA submissions related to marine science
  - McKinnon Marine Science review 1994
  - AS2299 – Scientific diving section based on AMSA Code
  - Oceans Policy – major AMSA contribution
- AMSA reps on many government committees
  - Committee for Marine Industries, Science & Technology
  - Diving: S17 Diving & Expert working group for WorkSafe
- NOAG to implement Oceans Policy

2000s: Keeping up with demand
- Keeping AMSA house in order
  - Strategic planning (governance, budget, communication etc)
  - Major position papers, statements & policies
    - Marine taxonomy; Marine pests; MPA position statement
  - Countless AMSA submissions related to marine science
    - Battersham review; GBR RAP; National research priorities; Skills audit; NCRIS; Senate enquiry on Australia’s national parks, reserves & MPAs; Productivity Commission; National strategy for conservation; H&S diving regulations; National biodiversity strategy; RV Investigator operation; Biodiversity in changing climate; ERA journals; Regional Marine Plans; Role of science in fisheries & aquaculture
- AMSA reps on government committees
  - SF17 Australian Diving Standards
  - Oceans Policy Scientific Advisory Group

2010s: Into the future
- Avoiding senescence & complacency
- Retaining & engaging membership
- Maintaining strong branches
- Updating constitution to reflect modern practices
- Role of scientific societies in 21st century
- Advocacy for marine science priorities
- Representation of non-agency scientists
- AMSA on National Marine Science Steering Committee proposed in Marine Nation 2025?
- Based on past 50 years, AMSA will surely continue to shape Australian marine science into the future
- Writing the headlines of Australian marine science