NZ PLANT PROTECTION SOCIETY INC. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY for the 1999-2000 Year

M.R.BUTCHER

The previous 12 months have seen the consolidation of the membership information as a MS Access 2000 database. To overcome possible Y2K issues the Society purchased a fully compliant software system (MS Office 2000) licensed to the Society. This means that when the Secretariat changes, the whole system goes and provided the new secretary is PC literate and has access to a PC with appropriate specifications there will be fewer change-over hassles. With CD writers becoming commonplace now the whole database can be transferred easily.

Membership demography was looked at by the Exec at its March meeting and some figures may interest you:

Membership summary as at 9 March 2000

Categories:

Life member – working	4
Life member – retired	3
Ordinary Member – University	19
Ordinary Member – CRI	183
Ordinary Member – Private/Co	144
Ordinary Member – Local Authority	6
Associate member – retired	3
Associate member – student	16
Overseas member	8
Corporate Member	18
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	397

Affiliations:

AgResearch	47
Crop & Food	19
Forest Research	13
Hort Research	56
Landcare	15
MAF/AgriQuality	16
Universities	
Auckland	1
Lincoln	16
Massey	6
Otago	2
Waikato	2

Geographic distributions:

Auckland and Northland	80	Misc/Private/Industry	204
Hamilton and district	52		<hr/>
Rest of NI	110		397
Christchurch and district	115		
Rest of SI	32		
Overseas	8		
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	397		

Of the 397 on the database 285 are current financial members (inclusive of life members). A high number of non-financial members on the books seem to be carry over of one-off applications from the 50th Conference. The last of these have now been purged from the membership and the current database lists 360 members. Hopefully these will all renew financial membership for 2000/2001.

I would like to start reducing the amount of paper we generate, the costs of publication and mailouts (as well as the mailout workload) by sending the newsletter, subscription notices, conference registration forms and programmes electronically and having them posted on the website. I would appreciate comment from the membership on the acceptability of this. I realise some members are not electronically 'available' and these members would still receive their hardcopy versions.

The use of bankcard payment as an option has been popular enabling those people with corporate and/or personal cards to take advantage of the system. Direct credit may be a future option the incoming Exec can look at.

The Website continues to be popular and updates have been provided regularly in the newsletter by the Website Editor. The website has increased the international interface of the Society significantly with requests about the conference and submission of papers coming from several countries outside Australasia.

Book sales have been steady with bulk orders becoming commonplace from the larger bookstore chains. The arrangement with Manaaki Whenua Press is working well from our perspective but the margin for "**An Illustrated Guide ..**" is proving a little low for them. MWP also handle the non-participant sales of the 1999 symposium publication "**Managing Urban Weeds and Pests**".

As you will see from the Treasurer's report the Society is in sound financial standing. Your Exec looked at several ideas for books but none appeared to be viable either because of competition in the marketplace or because of a limited retail market. Please let us know about any ideas you think the incoming Exec should consider by way of a project.

The annual conference continues to beg the questions of cost and location. Our membership demography is about 2:1 NI:SI and the traditional 2NI:1SI conference seems fair. Finding a cost acceptable venue large enough to hold the conference is not always easy. Travel-wise the main centres are easier and often cheaper to get to for the majority of members and have more people to call upon to assist with organisation.

As can be seen from the last few conferences the registration fees have broken the \$100 barrier for the three days. The Society hosts a very cheap conference even at \$120 fee. Most conferences are \$120 per day minimum and \$300 per day per person is not unusual. The constraints of this very low conference fee result in a lot of time wasting on behalf of the organising committee apparently penny-pinching to save a few dollars per person. The savings per person are often not worth the trouble of trying achieve them. I think it is time the Society became of age and accepted a realistic registration fee so that the organising committee has a less onerous job. This does not mean I condone extravagance but having been involved in the process this year some cost cutting to keep the costs at or below \$120 were difficult to achieve and involved time that could be ill-afforded.

The effects on conference attendance if the fee was up to \$150 per person per conference is not known and needs to be explored possibly via a website / newsletter survey.

I would like to thank the outgoing Exec, Mary Hiron and Rodger Welsh for the continued support I have received over the year – it has made my tasks much easier.