**WSCS – ASPS Council Report 2020**

Contents: Award lectures, Social Media, Phytogen and member metric and webpage updates

WSCS team: Janet Wheeler, Georgia Koerber, Beth Loveys, William Salter, Caitlin Byrt

ASPS Award Lectures

Due to the COVID19 pandemic and the cancellation of Combio the WSCS worked towards creating an opportunity for ASPS award winners to present their award lectures via virtual platform. In April 2020 the committee followed up on a brilliant idea from Beth to approach the organiser of Plantae Presents, a webinar series was created in response to the shutting down of labs and universities in early 2020. Plantae is the online home for the global plant science community powered by the American Society of Plant Biologists.

The Plantae Presents webinars are curated and organised by the Plantae Presents Steering Committee: Jűrgen Kleine-Vehn, Javier Moreno, Katie Rogers, Benjamin Schwessinger, and Mary Williams.

In Mid April Mary Williams was contacted by the WSCS to determine if this would be an appropriate forum for the ASPS award lectures. By July a date and time for an ASPS Plantae Presents session had been secured.

The award lectures will be a combination of pre-recorded seminars and live presentations on September 30th 4.30pm AEST with ASPS President, Kathleen Soole, Chairing the session.

The WSCS notes that the Plantae platform may well be a useful tool for virtual presentations for ASPS even when we are not living under COVID restrictions

<https://plantae.org/education/plantae_presents/>

WSCS, in particular Beth, also coordinated a pre-recorded video presentation for the ASPS Teaching Award recipient team. As the award this year was won by Hank Greenway supported by Brian Atwell, David Turner and Jane Gibbs a video compilation has been produced to be played at the virtual AGM on October 1st.

ASPS Social Media

In the past year, the ASPS WSCS has continued to use social media to raise the profile of the society, Australian plant science research and to provide better networking amongst our members. Since our last annual report, we have had > 300 new followers on Twitter and almost 3000 new profile views. The ASPS Facebook page now has over 2000 followers, up from 1800 last year. We continued to encourage members to tag @asps\_ozplants on Twitter so that we could share content we may have otherwise missed.

For the first time, led by Tam, the WSCS “live-tweeted” the society’s annual conference, ASPS2019. This was very well received as it enabled those unable to attend the conference to follow along virtually. At several points during the meeting, the hashtag #ASPS2019 was trending on Twitter. Increased presence on Twitter during the meeting also provided a platform for networking and discussion between conference attendees.

We hope to continue our upwards trajectory on these platforms into 2021. We feel this is more important than ever in this increasingly virtual world. We hope to recruit more “Tweeter” members to ensure that we accurately cover the broad scope of interests of the society and its members. We hope to also provide improved access for the society Executive Committee to these platforms, to allow for better dialogue as a society on issues of importance.

ASPS Phytogen

In the past year, thanks to Georgia editions of Phytogen have been sent out by the WSCS each month. There was one exception and that was a combined edition for July/August. It felt like a very different year with the COVID19 pandemic. In this often isolated environment we were all ensued into, Phytogen was very much written with the intention of reaching out and trying to help maintain connections and promote morale. The twitter, facebook and emailing out were excellent in helping to get the content out.

Throughout the year, there was enough content with poster reports, travel (those were the days ☺) and award reports from ASPS2019. Other editions had content supplied by Rana Munns, David Turner and Jane Gibbs for the teaching of Hank Greenway. There was also Plant Nutrition Trust awardee reports from 2019. To chase up is PNT award winners for 2020 at some stage.

There were also editions adapting to online environments, accessing digital resources, promoting Plants in Action as digital teaching resources. There were also links to social media, trying to get members to post photos of house plants, events for Fascination of Plants Day, International Year of Plant Health, Girls in Science, Science week and promoting Plantae Webinars and online courses. At the start of the year, we had been asking members and students to send photos for banner designs and any stories of their research they would like to share.

For an edition planned for October/November 2020, Georgia had coffee meeting with Roberta De Bei, superstar of STEM and has meeting times lined up with Rachel Burton and Tracey Cuin, STA ambassadors and planning for Phytogen edition about interactions with their matched Ministers of Parliament. This is in lieu of Science Meets Parliament.

As we progress into 2021, it would be good to have more contributions. If discipline/state representatives and students would like to handle editions that would be a very positive thing to do.

Janet’s ASPS member metrics and ASPS page views

Current ASPS membership

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Membership type** | **Number of members** |
| Ordinary membership 1 year\* | 15 |
| Ordinary membership 2 years\* | 39 |
| Ordinary membership 4 years\* | 42 |
| Student membership 2 years\* | 84 |
| Retired | 40 |
| Life | 8 |
| Corresponding | 12 |
| Honorary (reciprocal Societies) | 3 |
| Sustaining\* | 2 |
| **Current financial members\*** | **182** |

Over the past 60 days ASPS web page top views have been;

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Plants in Action 2nd edition | 1,970 views |
| Plants in Action 1st edition | 276 views |
| ASPS job board | 169 views |

**Draft 2021 ASPS blog post calendar**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Usual eg GPC, employment | Committee contributions | WCSC contributions | Student contributions | Phytogen related | Secretary |
| December 2020 | GPC E-bulletin | Genetics & Molecular Biology Rep |  |  | Congratulations to the organising committee to a fantastic ASPS 2019  Any outstanding winners reports? | Minutes of AGM to send. Action items from Council/AGM. Welcome to new discipline reps and new executive team. |
| January 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | President’s welcome | Call for Jan Anderson, Peter Goldacre, JG Wood award application |  | Winner reports (student posters ASPS 2019) | Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| February 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | Environmental & Ecophysiology Rep | Call for Teaching Award application  Welcome to new student reps (hopefully) |  | 2019 Robertson recipient report  Applications for ALL awards close 14th Feb | Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| March 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | State report…SA | Science meet parliament report and call for nominees for 2020 SMP |  | Reminder ASPS meeting/Combio 2021 | Close of 2020 Jan Anderson, Goldacre and JG Wood award  Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| April 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | Plant-Microbe Interactions Rep | Remind members end of Earlybird Registration for ASPS meeting/Combio  Friday 26 June 2020  Abstract Submission Deadline  Friday 26 June 2020 |  | Winner reports (student travel from ASPS 2020) | Close of Teaching award  Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| May 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | Whole Plants Rep | Call for student travel grants to ASPS meeting/Combio  Fascination in Plants Day |  | Call for student travel grants to ASPS meeting/Combio | Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| June 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | State report …NSW | What did you do for Fascination in Plants Day? |  | Early bird registration and abstracts due | Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| July 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | Plant Development Rep |  |  |  |  |
| August 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | Secretary AGM docs |  |  | Reminder ASPS meeting/Combio 2020 | Secretary AGM docs  Minutes of AGM. Action items from Council/AGM. Instructions for ASPS reps on LOC of next ASPS meeting/Combio. Welcome to new discipline/student reps.  Send reminder for Committee Contribution |
| September 2021 | GPC E-bulletin | Cell Biology Rep |  |  |  |  |
| October 2021 | GPC E-bulletin |  |  |  |  |  |
| November 2021 | GPC E-bulletin |  |  |  |  |  |
| December 2021 | GPC E-bulletin |  |  |  | Poster and oral student winners  RN Robertson Travelling Fellowship 2021 |  |