# ASPS Treasurer’s Report for the Period 1 May 2022 – 30 Apr 2023

### Prepared by Mark Waters (ASPS Honorary Treasurer)

### Presented at the AGM on Thursday 30 November 2023, University of Tasmania

## BUDGET

The financial position of the Society, for the financial year 1 May 2022 – 30 April 2023, is strong. The Society holds significant cash reserves, largely due to the significant income received from the profits of the ASPS and ComBio conferences in 2018 and 2019. Membership income continued to grow this year, but expenses increased relative to previous years that were impacted by COVID-19. In 2022/2023, this culminated in an end of year operating deficit of $9,498.77, after two years of substantial operating surpluses ($31,606.34 in 2021/22 and $72,830.82 in 2020/21). A large proportion ($3,328) of this deficit was due to investment losses in the RN Robertson Fund which suffered from financial market jitters in early 2023. However, this deficit does not account for our proportion of profits from the ComBio2022 conference ($18,208), which will be recorded in FY2023/24. As a result, our overall financial position is robust. As of 30 April 2023, our accumulated funds in the Commonwealth Bank totalled $163,113.11 ($4,379.99 Transaction Account plus $158,733.12 Online Saver Account) and balance of the Robertson Fund is $156,736.00. Note that $13,250 of the Commonwealth Bank account belongs to the RN Robertson Fund based on a previous decision made at the 2009 AGM. The current Honorary Treasurer has only just discovered this fact, and will endeavour to transfer these funds within the 2023/24 financial year.

## ASPS INCOME

ASPS has three main sources of income: 1) a proportion of the profits from conferences we support (ComBio/ASPS); 2) ASPS membership fees and web-based advertising; and 3) bank interest and donations.

### ComBio 2022 (Melbourne)

This joint conference, spearheaded by the Australian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB), was highly profitable. Within the FY2022/23, we received from ASBMB the long-awaited profits of Combio2018 ($8,182.26) as well as the return of seed funding for ComBio2022 ($8,480). Our share of genuine profits for ComBio2022 ($18,207.78) was received in May 2023, and will thus be recorded in the next financial year.

### Membership income and advertising income

We received $18,910 in membership income this year, slightly less than the previous year ($21,360). Such fluctuation is normal, especially as student membership lasts for two years and there was a significant boost in student numbers for the 2021 hybrid conference. Our membership breakdown is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **22/23\*** | **21/22** | **20/21** | **19/20** | **18/19** | **17/18** | **16/17** | **15/16** | **14/15** | **13/14** |
| \*\*Ordinary | 167 | 151 | 142 | 96 | 127 | 132 | 127 | 237 | 107 | 101 |
| \*\*Student | 173 | 193 | 171 | 84 | 118 | 201 | 224 | 292 | 345 | 229 |
| Retired | 26 | 11 | 15 | 40 | 7 | 31 | 31 | 35 | 36 | 28 |
| Corresponding | 24 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 10 |
| Life | 17 | 15 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Gratis | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| \*\*Sustaining | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total (\*\*financial) | 340 | 344 | 313 | 182 | 275 | 385 | 402 | 582 | 502 | 316 |

\* As at 10 November 2023

The current membership fees are: ordinary member: 1 year $100.00; 2 years $180.00; 4 years $340.00; student member: 2 years $50.00; sustaining member $600.00 (increased from $300 in 2023).

We received a just $104 in website income from Hogan Media for advertising employment opportunities.

### Bank Interest

After the recent rises in the cash rate, respectable interest is earned in the CBA accounts ($749.48). However, the RN Roberston Fund suffered a loss of $3,328. This is small compared to the substantial gains in 2021/22 ($21,310). Our award budget of $7,000 is likely still appropriate under these conditions.

## EXPENDITURE

Expenditure has increased to more “normal” levels after the pandemic as our travel and conference activities have resumed.

### Research and Conference Travel Support

Significant outgoings included supporting student travel to ComBio2022 ($10,300), as well as two research travel awards from the RN Robertson Fund in 2022 ($3,600 to Oscar Fung [Uni Melbourne], $3,400 to Nattiwong Pankasem [UCSD/ANU]). The Society also supported two members to attend Science Meets Parliament ($2,574; A/Prof Jenny Mortimer [UoA] and Dr Neeta Lohani [Uni Melbourne).

### Society Awards

The 2022 Goldacre Award was sponsored by CSIRO Publishing ($2,000). The 2022 Jan Anderson Award was joint-sponsored by CSIRO Agriculture and Food ($1,000), the ARC CoE for Plant Success ($500), the ARC Training Hub for Crop Protection ($250) and the ARC Training Hub for Future Crops ($250). Thus, both awards were fully sponsored.

### ASPS Operating Costs

The ASPS website requires continual data management and web servicing. Our website is hosted and maintained by Conetix ($420.00). We also paid $360 to Bearded Friend for a website audit and $275 to Janet Wheeler for website administration costs.

Bank charges and billing fees were $451. However, we also suffered a loss of $440 due to merchant chargebacks of two membership fee transactions ($100 and $340). As there was no bank correspondence or notification relating to these reversed charges, the Treasurer cannot account for them, but he assumes it is due to disputed (unrecognised) credit card transactions. Such chargebacks appear to be rare events for the Society.

ASPS is a member of Science and Technology Australia (STA), which runs Science Meets Parliament, and the Global Plant Council (GPC). These memberships are important for developing networks and highlighting the importance of the plant science in Australia and internationally. We paid $1391.60 to STA in 2022/2023, and $3266.91 to GPC for two years of membership (2021 and 2022).

The financial transactions have been audited (Australian Unity) and the Auditor’s report is available for perusal with the financial summary at the AGM. Following the AGM, the Auditor’s report and financial summary will be submitted to the Registrar General’s Office in the ACT by our Public Officer (Prof. John Evans).

In summary, the society’s finances are in good health. The society has generated a small technical deficit in 2022/2023 that is balanced out by expected strong income in 2023/24. This will ensure we can support our activities in 2023/24, which will include providing student travel awards for two conferences (ASPS2023 in Hobart, and IPMB2024 in Cairns).

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Mark Waters, Honorary Treasurer ASPS

30 November 2023, ASPS AGM 2023