

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**  
**Official publication of The Australian Rangeland Society**

**Copyright and Photocopying**

© The Australian Rangeland Society 2014. All rights reserved.

For non-personal use, no part of this item may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission of the Australian Rangeland Society and of the author (or the organisation they work or have worked for). Permission of the Australian Rangeland Society for photocopying of articles for non-personal use may be obtained from the Secretary who can be contacted at the email address, [rangelands.exec@gmail.com](mailto:rangelands.exec@gmail.com)

For personal use, temporary copies necessary to browse this site on screen may be made and a single copy of an article may be downloaded or printed for research or personal use, but no changes are to be made to any of the material. This copyright notice is not to be removed from the front of the article.

All efforts have been made by the Australian Rangeland Society to contact the authors. If you believe your copyright has been breached please notify us immediately and we will remove the offending material from our website.

**Form of Reference**

The reference for this article should be in this general form;

Author family name, initials (year). Title. *In*: Proceedings of the nth Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference. Pages. (Australian Rangeland Society: Australia).

For example:

Anderson, L., van Klinken, R. D., and Shepherd, D. (2008). Aerially surveying Mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) in the Pilbara. *In*: 'A Climate of Change in the Rangelands. Proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conference'. (Ed. D. Orr) 4 pages. (Australian Rangeland Society: Australia).

**Disclaimer**

The Australian Rangeland Society and Editors cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information obtained in this article or in the Proceedings of the Australian Rangeland Society Biennial Conferences. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Rangeland Society and Editors, neither does the publication of advertisements constitute any endorsement by the Australian Rangeland Society and Editors of the products advertised.



*The Australian Rangeland Society*

## A REVIEW OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN RANGELAND SOCIETY

J.G. Morrissey & Gwynne Hughes

It would be fair to say that this society was created because a group of rangeland scientists arrived at the conclusion that there was a need for change in which Australian rangelands are used and managed. It was created as a forum where an exchange of ideas could result in improved rangeland management in Australia. It was recognised that there was need for communication between the administrators, managers and scientists to ensure that the necessary changes did occur. This concerned group set up a hierarchy of objectives for the society, gave the society a name and here we are today, largely it is predicted, a group of scientists setting about a discussion in scientific terms on matters of science in rangelands.

What are the objectives of the society, how are we progressing toward these goals and are there any changes needed to redirect the society towards the goals.

The second article in the memorandum of the Australian Rangeland Society consists of the hierarchy of objectives for the society and the first and second items in this hierarchy are:

- (a) To promote the science and art of using Australia's rangeland resources for all purposes commensurate with their continued productivity and stability.
- (b) To encourage and develop an awareness of the need to conserve the inherent resources of the Australian rangeland areas.

The remaining objectives are largely devoted to formalizing the means by which (a) and (b) above will be realized.

Despite a resurgence in mining and a dramatic growth in the tourist industry, the majority of the operational management discussions in our rangelands are still and will continue to be made by the managers of sheep and/or cattle grazing enterprises. These people have experience in overcoming the day to day problems of property management, and the direction and nature of the changes that occur in rangeland management technology must take into account this experience.

The achievement of the objectives of this society depends on the nature of the discussions made by these managers and the society must therefore attract managers to it, so that they can gain the insight into rangeland management that is available from rangeland scientists. Similarly, the efforts of the scientists must be tempered by the experience of the managers.

At present, the society does not attract sufficient managers. 21 per cent. of its membership is made up of managers, 2 per cent. are administrators. The majority, 77 per cent. are people with scientific training professionally engaged in rangeland investigation. As might be expected, the society caters largely for the needs of the majority. It provides a human group environment in which scientists can feel at ease and find social rewards. This group environment created by the society is less able to provide opportunity for satisfaction of the social needs of the rangeland managers who have attitudes and beliefs much different to those of rangeland scientists.

The formation of human groups and the development of group environments that are rewarding to their members is normal human behaviour and the pattern of development of this society may well be for it to accumulate more and more people with ideas and fewer and fewer people with the ability or opportunity to make the type of decisions that will result in the ultimate achievement of the society's objectives. The society must recognise this danger and strive to provide a group environment attractive to more managers.

The society's journal is a significant component of the group environment of this society. The style is clearly that of a scientific journal and it provides scientists with the opportunity to be identified with other scientists. It is unlikely the people involved in Australian rangelands who are without scientific training would feel compelled to read or contribute to it. The argument is not that the publication is a poor journal, rather that given the objectives of this society, that the journal is incompatible with the achievement of those objectives. The journal caters largely for one section of the society's membership and though it caters for the majority of members, it should be designed to attract more of the people who ultimately are the decision makers in Australian rangelands.

Obviously it can equally be argued that if the society provided a less satisfactory environment for rangeland scientists, that it would be weakened by the loss of members with scientific training. However, people who are employed as investigators in Australian rangelands have a responsibility to ensure that the work they do is relevant to the problems faced by managers and that the results of their work does become part of the operational decisions making process. Researchers are in a special position, and they have greater opportunity to recognise the requirements for an effective communication process between themselves and rangeland managers. They should be prepared to accommodate the demands of this communication process. Both managers and investigators within the society have recognised that there is a communication gap between them, but the onus to bridge this gap rests more with the investigators. If the communication process can be enhanced by changing the style of the journal, this should be accepted as part of the requirement for meeting the objectives of the society.

The objectives of the Australian Rangeland Society are reasonable, however the achievement of these objectives depends on attracting managers to the society. An avenue that may yield clues on how to make the society relevant to rangeland managers would be to explore why a large proportion of the manager members are South Australians, i.i. 16 out of 31.