



THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND
FORENSIC SCIENCE SOCIETY INC.

**ANZFSS Annual General Meeting
2020**

President's Report: Adrian Linacre OAM

Dear ANZFSS Member,

This is the last of my reports as it is now over 4 years since I became President at the Auckland symposium and I am not standing for re-election. The next report(s) will come from our President-Elect, Prof James Curran.

The function of the ANZFSS is due to the work of the current Executive and Council. The Executive during the 14 months from the last AGM in Darwin 2019 till November 2020 has been:

President: Adrian Linacre
VP New Zealand: James Curran (President Elect)
VP Australia: Alison Sears
Treasurer: Natasha Mitchell
Secretary: Carolyne Bird
Past President: Claude Roux

Council membership has varied slightly since the last AGM, in Darwin last year. The ANZFSS Branch Presidents during this time have included:

Branch	President(s)
ACT	Nick Lucas, as Secretary has been attending Council
NSW	Jennifer Raymond
NT	Kate Cheong-Wing/Jo Giaccio
NZ	James Curran/Rachel Nickerson
Queensland	Annu Nangia
SA	Julianne Henry/Denice Higgins
Tasmania	Charles Connor
VIC	Jim Pearson/Erin Pirie
WA	John McGinn

Opening Comments

The year 2020 will be remembered for a long time; alas not for the right reasons. So much of 2020 has been dominated by restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Conferences and meetings have been cancelled or postponed. It is looking as if international travel will not resume as before until the latter half of 2021. Our AGM in 2020 was due to be held during the symposium in conjunction with the International Association of Forensic Sciences. Ideally I would have been standing on the stage chairing this last AGM and handing over to James Curran. The alternative to have a standalone AGM hosted physically by a Branch has become too problematic and hence this AGM will be virtual.

The society also lost one of the leaders of forensic science, and a past President of the ANZFSS, with the passing of Tony Raymond. Much has already been written about Tony. Suffice to add that there will be very few who will ever get near to matching his achievements; someone who truly has made the world a better place.

ANZFSS Council Meetings

Executive and Council have each met five times since the 2019 AGM in Darwin. Many of the actions that have occurred in the last 12 months, since the President's report of 2019, are provided below.

All Council meetings have been via Zoom and hosted mostly by James Curran at Auckland University. More recently, Council invested in a Zoom licence to allow up to 1,000 members to log-in at any one time. Any member of the Executive can now use Zoom to host meetings for Council and Executive virtual meetings.

Branch Meetings

Local Branch meetings are the life blood of our society. Yet, since March 2020, restrictions due to COVID-19 have greatly curtailed Branch meetings. Like so many societies, we had to adapt and develop virtual meetings. A benefit is that all ANZFSS members can register to watch a presentation hosted by any of the Branches. This, in a limited way, has compensated for no face-to-face meetings.

Very many of our members join and renew membership primarily to attend Branch meetings. While Zoom has been an excellent alternative, and has allowed a much wider audience, there is no doubt in my mind that a return to a physical meeting is needed across all branches as soon as possible. A worry otherwise is that membership numbers will decrease without this regional activity.

IAFS/ANZFSS

Our joint symposium with the IAFS should have been in September this year. IAFS is now postponed until 2023 to return to its 3 year cycle. The plenary speakers are able to commit to this new date and the sponsors have been supportive. It is envisaged that the themes within the scientific programme will remain in the same format although there will be a new call out for abstracts nearer the time.

ANZFSS symposium

The society took the decision to support a standalone symposium from 11th to 15th September 2022. The last symposium was in Perth in 2018 and leaving a 5 year gap was considered by Council to be too long. The next symposium will be hosted by the Queensland Branch and held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Travel from wherever you are to Brisbane should be back to near-normal by September 2022. The Queensland Branch are aware that delegate numbers may be affected by a hangover of travel restrictions and other international conferences also now moved to 2022, so it is imperative that the society gets behind this meeting and gives it all the support it needs. You will hear more about the symposium in the months to come.

Allan Hodda Award

VP James Curran and VP Alison Sears assisted the President with the assessment process again. Nicola Beckett from WA was the winner of the award for 2020. Unfortunately the conferences which Nicola wished to attend were victims of COVID-19. We have made the decision to allow Nicola the opportunity to travel when conferences resume.

Applications for the 2020 award closed in October. The same members of the Executive were willing to be part of the assessment process. James and I read all the applications and used similar scoring systems. It was competitive as ever with some strong applications, however James and I agreed that there was one application just scored higher than the others: this was by Matthew Bolton, a firearms examiner based in NSW.

Professional Membership

There are now 24 members of the ANZFSS who are professional members. Societies such as ours should have a professional category of membership and this is one the actions that happened during my tenure as President. The instigation of the PM was driven by VP Ali Sears with much assistance from other members of the Executive.

Each application is assessed by myself (except my own!), the President of the Branch to which the applicant is a member, and an area expert. I wish to thank all the Branch Presidents that have played a role in this assessment process and all the area experts who gave their time so willingly. The assessment process is not possible without your time and effort.

Visits to Branches

During my tenure as President, I visited every branch except the closest to me geographically (Victoria). This may have occurred in 2020 but travel restrictions prevented any travel from March to October 2020.

Until March 2020, the Branches were very active with many meetings held and others planned. This will resume across all Branches as soon as restrictions on travel and size of venues allows. Some Branches have already resumed local meetings.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Unfortunately this could not take place this year. I am confident that James Curran will be present at the next meeting.

Standards Australia

As ANZFSS President I am invited to play a role on the forensic panel of Standards Australia. In the first year this required attendance at meetings, either in Sydney, Brisbane or Melbourne. The committee is CH-041 and chaired by Dr Linzi Wilson-Wilde OAM with David Neville from Queensland Police as a representative at international fora.

In the last year the standards under review have been:

- ISO CD 21043-3, Forensic Sciences – Part 3: Analysis
- ISO CD 21043-4, Forensic Sciences – Part 4: Interpretation
- ISO CD 21043-5, Forensic Sciences – Part 5: Reporting

Handover Document

Calls for nomination to the Executive were made a few weeks ago. To aid any prospective nominee, and those that accept such a position, the Executive have produced a document that details the role of each member of the Executive. It is envisaged that this document will be useful to detail the tasks expected and can be added to and amended should these alter.

President Elect

At the AGM in Darwin we voted on the establishment of a President-Elect. Six months ago, James Curran took up this position. At the end of the AGM, I will hand over the Presidency to James. By being President-Elect, James is aware of all the current undertakings of the society and will be able to take on the role of President from day one.

Concluding Comments

This is my last report after 4 years as President. It is only right and proper that I record my gratitude to those that made my time as President as incident-free as possible. My thanks first to all members of Council, past and current, for their support and making the chairing of Council an enjoyable, if at times eventful, experience.

I took on the role of President in 2016 following on from Claude Roux. Claude had been President for 6 years before me, and hence this was always going to be a hard act to follow. With Claude remaining on the Executive, there was always advice I could call on.

Nat took over as Treasurer nearly two years ago and has been highly efficient. Thank you Nat for keeping the funds in a good state and acting so promptly when called on for reimbursements and any other financial transaction.

The two VPs have always been supportive and accepted any delegation. Ali has played key roles in assessing awards. James likewise and will now be an excellent President into the future. The society will be in safe hands!

Lastly, I could never have done this role without the amazing assistance of Carlyne. Not only hyper-efficient, but Carlyne has been incredibly supportive as well as keeping me right so many times!

President's Report/2020

I wish the new Executive all success and will play my role as Past-President as the need arises.

Adrian

Prof. Adrian Linacre OAM

President: Australian & New Zealand Forensic Science Society