ASPS Treasurer's Report for the Period 1 May 2010 – 30 Apr 2011
Prepared by Helen Irving (ASPS Honorary Treasurer)
Presented at the AGM on Wednesday 28th September 2011

This is the first year as Honorary Treasurer of ASPS. I wish to acknowledge Tony Ashton the previous treasurer who assisted me in taking on this role and who through his work on the website has made it much easier to manage the membership than previously.

This May 2010 / April 2011 audit period the Society had a surplus of $20,029.87 compared to a surplus of $52,438.68 the year before. ASPS has three main sources of income. ASPS membership subscriptions and a proportion of the profits from each ComBio meeting have been our major sources for a long time. We also have income from Plants in Action.

Royalty payments from the first edition of Plants in Action have nearly ceased (although we have received some income in 2011/12 from this source; in part because we bought the final hardback copies of PiA in May 2010). However, we have obtained considerable income this financial year from sponsors for the online version of Plants in Action and Plants in Action2. We gratefully acknowledge our sponsors here: Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics (ACPFG), The University of Western Australia and the University of Western Sydney. It is also important to acknowledge the fantastic efforts of the Plants in Action editorial team for their roles in obtaining this funding, particularly Susanne Schmidt and Rana Munns.

Income from ComBio is calculated from the number of registrants attending the meeting from each of the participating societies. We have been paid for the 2009 meeting at Christchurch in New Zealand but we are yet to be paid for OzBio from last year (about 16% attendees were ASPS members).

The number of ordinary members has stabilized at a significantly higher number compared to the low point reached in 2006/7 and I believe that it can be attributed to the ease of renewing membership through the new web gateway at www.asps.org.au established by Tony Ashton. The current total of 458 members comprises 244 ordinary members, 164 student members, 29 retired members, 10 corresponding members, 6 Life members and 2 gratis members (at the end of August 2011). As Tony has done in the past, I will be providing Council members with details of current, lapsed and forgetful members in their states and institutions so they can remind non member plant scientists about our Society. The ASPS Executive decided in 2010 that retired members of ASPS need not pay a membership fee and although we miss out on some income, we benefit from keeping in touch with our long time members who retire. Perhaps they will instead consider donating to the RN Robertson Fund.

Table 1: ASPS membership in the Ordinary and Student categories over the last five years.

Category	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08	06/07	05/06
Ordinary	244	238	283	209	166	184
Student	164	151	176	151	158	175

This year the Executive agreed that membership fees should be raised; these fees have been unaltered for several years, however during this period our expenses have increased. The proposed new fees are: ordinary member 1 year $85.00; 2 years $155.00 and student member 4 years $60.00. I believe that these increases still reflect good value for members (e.g. reduced fees at ComBio; benefits of student membership, etc).

The Society recognises the importance of student participation for its long-term wellbeing. Student membership is encouraged through special awards (RN Robertson Fund) and attendance at ComBio is encouraged by subsidising a considerable part of their travel, accommodation and registration costs. Last year 20 students received support from ASPS to attend the OzBio (ComBio) meeting in Melbourne at a cost of $11,200. We also support student attendance at special meetings and provided ~$10,000 in student travel assistance to the International Botanical Congress meeting in Melbourne in July 2011 (more about this next year). Furthermore, ASPS rewards active participation by students in the ComBio program by recognising outstanding posters and oral presentations with monetary prizes.

We provide seed money for conferences and in the last year we provided seed money to the International Workshop on Plant Membrane Biology XV held in Adelaide September 2010. We also provided seed money to the Plasmodesmata 2010 conference held in Sydney in March 2010 which has been repaid.

One of my goals as Treasurer of ASPS is to attract more Sustaining members to the Society. An organization or company willing to support our Society can pay $300 per annum to become a Sustaining member. In return for this fee they have their name and web link placed on our website and they receive free advertising space in our e-newsletter *Phytogen*. The total number of sustaining members has dropped. Functional Plant Biology deserves a special mention because not only is it our longest Sustaining Member but it also instigated the Best Paper Award for student ASPS members and remains the generous benefactor of the Society's prestigious award to young scientists, the Goldacre Medal. I thank the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics (ACPFG) for sponsoring the Society and hope their action will serve as an impetus for other Australian plant research centres to become Sustaining members of ASPS.

Our Society Website, www.asps.org.au continues to function well and serves as convenient gateway to pay membership subscriptions. As mentioned earlier, I believe the new website and the electronic payment gateway is largely responsible for reversing the Society membership decline. The website was designed and is now maintained by Michael Major Media Pty Ltd.

The financial transactions have been submitted to our Auditor and are ready for the AGM and then the Auditor's report will be submitted to the Registrar General's Office by our Public Officer. In summary, I am pleased to report that the Society's finances remain sound. The balance in our accounts was $69,740.11 in the RN Robertson Fund administered by the University of Western Australia at April 30 2011 and as of 23 September 2011, $111,475.01 in our bank accounts. As mentioned earlier $33,000 of the bank account has been earmarked for the Robertson Fund from a decision at the 2009 AGM and $21,351.12 is for maintenance and production costs associated with the online versions of Plants in Action 1 and 2.

Helen Irving
Honorary Treasurer ASPS