ASPS Treasurer's Report for the Period 1 May 2019 – 30 Apr 2020
Prepared by Mike Haydon (ASPS Honorary Treasurer)
Presented at the AGM on Thursday 1 October 2020

BUDGET

The financial position of the Society, for the financial year 1 May 2019 - 30 April 2020, remains sound. As in other years, some flexibility is needed as expenses for ASPS activities do not always coincide with annual cycles of income returns. In 2018/2019, this culminated in an end of year operating surplus of $13,842.12, in contrast to deficits of $4,646.34 in 2018/2019 and $15,346.14 in 2017/2018. These differences arise largely from differences in the timing of conference income, which has become increasingly unpredictable since the change in the frequency of ComBio. As of 30 April, 2020 our accumulated funds in the Commonwealth Bank totalled $128,675.16 ($20,818.34 Transaction Account plus $107,856.82 Online Saver Account) and the RN Robertson Fund $96,096.30 (which includes $2,844.19 annual interest). Bank interest from our Commonwealth accounts totalled $187.30. Note that $13,250 of the Commonwealth Bank account belongs to the Robertson Fund based on a previous decision made at the 2009 AGM (Payment of an award was deferred in 2020 due to COVID-19).

ASPS INCOME

ASPS has three main sources of income: 1) a proportion of the profits from conferences we support (ComBio/ASPS); 2) ASPS membership subscriptions and web-based advertising and 3) bank interest and donations. We received $12,273.38 in conference proceeds from ComBio 2018 in Sydney but are still owed $8,182.26, which has been retained as seed funding for Combio 2022 (ComBio 2020 was postponed due to COVID). $5,000 in seed funding from InnovAg conference was returned. The Inaugural ASPS conference in 2019 returned a profit of $55,836.46, but funds were received after 30 April so will be reflected in the 2020/2021 Budget.

We received $13,210.00 in in membership subscriptions and renewals, compared to $17,551.00 in 2018/2019. Our membership status has dipped in the last two years:

Category	**19/20**	**18/19**	**17/18**	**16/17**	**15/16**	**14/15**	**13/14**	**12/13**	**11/12**	**10/11**	**09/10**
Ordinary	96	127	132	127	237	107	101	153	212	244	238
Student	84	118	201	224	292	345	229	210	192	164	151
Retired	40	7	31	31	35	36	28	14	14		
Corresponding	12	12	13	12	12	6	10	10			
Life	8	7	6	6	6	7	7	7			
Gratis	3	4	2	2	0	1	1	2			
Sustaining	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2			
Total	182	275	385	402	582	502	316	318	418	408	389

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 $300.00.

EXPENDITURE

ASPS 2019

Combio 2018 was the final annual ComBio, which now happens every two years. The Inaugural ASPS Conference was held at La Trobe University in Melbourne, which offered a great opportunity to showcase the multidisciplinary aspects of Australian Plant Science and as an important gathering place to meet colleagues and to develop research collaborations. The organisers were also able to attract high-impact plant science researchers to Australia as plenary speakers and mentors to our student and early career members. In 2019/2020, ASPS provided $3,452.40, mostly in the form of registration fee refunds.

The Society recognises the importance of student participation for its long-term wellbeing. Student membership is encouraged through special awards including the RN Robertson Fund and through subsidising a considerable part of their travel, accommodation, registration costs and the annual ASPS dinner when attending and presenting at ComBio or ASPS conferences. In 2019/2020, 16 students received support from ASPS to attend the ASPS meeting in Melbourne at a cost of $6,035.00 ($50-$500 per student) to the society. Furthermore, ASPS rewards active participation by students in the ASPS program by recognising outstanding posters with monetary prizes. We awarded three student poster prizes at ASPS 2019 ($500, $350, $150).

Research and Conference Travel Support

The R.N. Robertson Travel Award was awarded to Yingxuan Ma (La Trobe) in 2020 but payment has been deferred due to COVID-19 until travel is possible.

ASPS supports the attendance of two society members each year at Science meets Parliament in Canberra. The society paid for registration and travel for Tracey Cuin (UTas) and Ricky Milne (CSIRO) to attend in 2019 ($3,277.49).

ASPS Operating costs

The ASPS website requires continual data management and web servicing. Our website is hosted and maintained by Conetix ($420.00), we pay $52.95 to Melbourne IT for our domain name and Janet Wheeler updates our website and membership database.

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 $764.75 to STA and $1603.59 to GPC in 2019/2020.

In 2010-2011 funds ($36,327.87) were identified to support the revision and online preparation of Plants in Action version 2, managed through the University of Queensland. The funds reside within ASPS, and there is currently $3,656.12 remaining in the ASPS Plants In Action version 2 budget.

The financial transactions have been audited (Clarkson Williams Partners Pty Ltd, Fyshwick, ACT) 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 surplus in 2019/2020, which offsets the deficits in the previous two financial years. Despite falling membership, the substantial profits from the ASPS Conference in 2019 will put the society in a very strong financial position going forward and will ensure we can survive the challenges and uncertainties caused by COVID-19.

Mike Haydon
Honorary Treasurer ASPS
ASPS AGM 2020

For discussion at the ASPS AGM.

1. ASPS 2019 Profits
2. RN Robertson Fund
3. Membership levels