ASPS Treasurer's Report for the Period 1 May 2024 – 30 Apr 2025

Prepared by Mark Waters (ASPS Honorary Treasurer, UWA)

Presented at the AGM on Wednesday 26 November 2025, Flinders University

BUDGET

The financial position of the Society, for the financial year 1 May 2024 – 30 April 2025, remains healthy. The Society holds significant cash reserves, largely due to the significant income received from the profits of the ASPS and ComBio conferences. Membership income has remained steady. In 2024/2025, this culminated in an end-of-year operating surplus of $47,253, which further exceeds the previous year's strong surplus. A large proportion ($27,197) of this year's surplus results from growth in the RN Robertson Fund which benefitted from a major rebound in financial markets. As of 30 April 2025, our accumulated funds in the Commonwealth Bank totalled $220,253, while the balance of the Robertson Fund is $184,569.

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 3) bank interest, donations and advertising.

ASPS 2024 (Local/online hybrid meetings)

The Society annual meeting for 2024 was a hybrid event in which local one-day meetings came together for a national awards session online. Node meetings were held at La Trobe University (VIC), Flinders University (SA), University of Western Australia (WA), Queensland University of Technology (QLD) and Australian National university (ACT/NSW). Overall attendance is estimated at 400. Registration rates were kept low ($70/$20 for full /student member) as costs were mainly limited to catering. However, with nearly $30,000 secured in sponsorship (Bioplatforms Australia, ARC CoE Plant Success and ThermoFisher Scientific were major sponsors), the event made a profit of just under $28,000. This impressive result reflects the hard work of the conference organisers and underline the importance in obtaining substantial sponsorship for these events. Such success also allows us to subsidise other events, and provide student travel awards and carers support grants in "standard" years.

Membership Income

We received $11,370 in membership income this year, considerably less than in 2023-24 ($20,810), and 2022-23 ($18,910). Such fluctuation is normal, especially as student membership lasts for two years. Our membership breakdown, at or around the time of our AGM, is as follows:

Category	**24/25**	**23/24**	**22/23**	**21/22**	**20/21**	**19/20**	**18/19**	**17/18**	**16/17**	**15/16**
**Ordinary	119	121	167	151	142	96	127	132	127	237
**Student	158	192	173	193	171	84	118	201	224	292
Retired	13	19	26	11	15	40	7	31	31	35
Corresponding	18	19	24	12	12	12	12	13	12	12
Life	15	14	17	15	7	8	7	6	6	6
Honorary	2	3	5	1	3	3	4	2	2	0
**Sustaining	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total (**financial)	325 (277)	369 (314)	412 (340)	383 (344)	350 (313)	245 (182)	275 (245)	385 (333)	402 (351)	582 (529)

Current membership fees are: *Ordinary*, 1/2/4 years $100.00/$180.00/$340.00; *Student*, 2 years $50.00; *Sustaining* $600.00. Except for the *Sustaining* category, these rates have held constant since 2015.

Bank Interest, Donations and Advertising Income

Interest earned in the CBA accounts has dropped considerably ($911.69) and will be essentially negligible in the next financial year. As we hold a respectable cash balance, a term deposit is recommended to protect some purchasing power. The RN Roberston Fund benefitted from another gain of $27,197, building on the previous strong result of $19,636 in 2023/24. Arguably, our award budget of $7,000 could likely be increased, although we sometimes only receive one-two applications per year. The annuity is slated for review with UWA in 2026.

We received $208 in website income from Hogan Media for advertising two employment opportunities.

EXPENDITURE

Research and Conference Travel Support

The Society did not fund any significant travel support this year due to the local/hybrid meeting. However, we funded two research travel awards from the RN Robertson Fund in 2024 ($3,500 to Alastair Hockey [UWA], $3,500 to Nicole Thompson [Uni Melbourne]). The Society also supported two members to attend Science Meets Parliament ($3,465; Dr Ashley Jones [ANU] and Nipuni Peththa Thanthrige [UQ]).

Society Awards

The 2024 Goldacre Award was sponsored by Functional Plant Biology/CSIRO Publishing ($2,000). The 2024 Jan Anderson Award was joint-sponsored by Agrisera ($1,000) and the ARC CoE for Plant Success ($1000). 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 invested in a new website and payment portal, for which half the design costs ($4,000) were paid this year, and the balance in FY 2025-26.

The previous website used eWay to process website card payments for membership and conference registration. We paid a total of $350.90 in fees. Bank Merchant fees for receiving card payments into our CBA bank account totalled $725.86.

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. In 2024/2025, we paid $1,564.20 (up 21.5%) to STA, and US$1000/AU$1,612.64 (down 2% due to currency fluctuations) to GPC for membership (2024).

The financial transactions have been audited (Aaron Turner) and the Auditor's report is available for perusal with the financial summary at the AGM. As of 2024, Incorporated Associations are no longer required to lodge an annual return with Access Canberra, but must keep audited statement of accounts for at least seven financial years and provide them if requested.

In summary, the society's finances are in robust health. The society has generated a strong return for 2024/25, and we are expecting a similar scale of positive return for 2025-26. We have had a good run over the past five years, meaning that we can afford to continue (and arguably expand) our award schemes, and hold our membership dues steady.



Mark Waters, Honorary Treasurer ASPS

26 November 2025, ASPS AGM 2025