



AMSA-NZMSS 2012 Joint Conference Hobart: 1-5 July



Report on “AMSA-NZMSS 2012” (from Bob Hickman, NZMSS Rep on the Organising Committee)

The joint conference of the New Zealand Marine Sciences Society and the Australian Marine Sciences Association was held at the Wrest Point Hotel Convention Centre in Hobart during 1-5th July 2012. This was only the fourth time in just over (for NZMSS) and just under (for AMSA) the 50 year history of our two marine science organisations that we have come together for our annual conference. Previous joint meetings have been held in Auckland in 1997, in Townsville in 2001 and in Christchurch in 2008, but this latest one was the largest so far, with over 420 delegates. The majority of those attending were, not surprisingly, from Australia, but New Zealand was well represented with 86 delegates, and there was a smattering of international attendees. The New Zealand contingent included almost 40 students.

The theme of the 2012 conference – *Marine Extremes and Everything in Between* – was chosen as a timely focus on the extreme nature of environmental events in recent years, encompassing environments as broad as the Southern Ocean and Antarctica and events as extreme as cyclones, floods and tsunamis. The programme provided, in the words of the Scientific Program Committee Chair Dr Karen Miller, “a fantastic opportunity for marine scientists on both sides of the Tasman to come together and discuss their research and develop new initiatives”. It was divided into 15 symposia (hidden species, marine protected areas, bio-optics, marine mammals, trace elements, deep sea pelagic zone, environmental monitoring, boundary currents, marine technology, deep sea benthos, early life stages, biotechnology, biogeochemistry, invasive species, and estuarine cross-disciplinary studies) and 12 themed sessions (aquaculture, climate change, ecosystems, education, extreme events, extreme habitats, fisheries, marine policy, ocean acidification, oceanography, southern ocean and Antarctica, and ‘everything in between’). Kathy Walls, the NZMSS representative on the Scientific Program Committee, played a significant role in ensuring that New Zealand papers and authors figured prominently in the programme, and that it included an equal number of NZ keynote speakers to those from Australia.

Each day of the conference started with a plenary session; included in these were a ‘welcome to country’ on behalf of the indigenous people of Tasmania, the opening address from CSIRO oceanographer Dr Susan Wijffels and the four invited keynote addresses – from Scott Nodder and Dennis Gordon of NZMSS, and from David Griffin and Mike Coffin of AMSA – as well as a number of the symposium keynote papers. To accommodate the approximately 280 oral presentations required five concurrent sessions throughout the rest of the four days of the conference. There was also a dedicated poster session to enable the authors of roughly 70 posters to discuss their work with interested delegates, in the pleasant venue of the Boardwalk Gallery and in the convivial atmosphere sponsored by the National Environmental Research Program’s Marine Biodiversity Hub.

The conference delegates were well catered for, both by way of sumptuous morning and afternoon teas and lunches and through the various social events. These comprised the Cawthron Institute sponsored Welcome Function held on the Sunday evening, the poster session on the Monday night, a ‘student night’ function on the Tuesday (also attended by many ‘long since’ students!), and an

entertainment “Night in the Southern Ocean” on the Wednesday, when Don Neale gave a pre-dinner slideshow about a 2009 Department of Conservation scientific diving trip to the Antipodes and Bounty Islands, and Natural History New Zealand treated the meeting to the world premiere of its newest production, *Hunting the Ice Whales*. This new documentary, showcasing cutting-edge Antarctic whale research totally using non-lethal techniques, reports on a 2010 expedition involving Australian and New Zealand scientists and features NIWA’s research vessel, the ‘*Tangaroa*’. The social programme, and the conference itself, wound up with the CSIRO gala dinner on the Thursday night, comprising a three-course dinner and dancing to the music of popular Hobart band, ‘Rektango’. Included in the gala night’s entertainment were the prize-giving ceremonies for the AMSA and NZMSS student prizes and the presentation of the NZMSS Award, for their outstanding contribution to marine science in New Zealand, to John Booth (accepted on his behalf by newly elected NZMSS President, Mary Livingston) and to Malcolm Clark. [These two new recipients of the NZMSS Award received certificates at the gala dinner at AMSA-NZMSS 2012, with the actual bronze sculptures – too heavy to be taken across to Hobart - to be presented later at a ceremony at NIWA Greta Point in Wellington.]

The 2012 AGM of NZMSS was held after the plenary session on Thursday morning (concurrently with the AMSA AGM) and, as a scheduled item on the conference programme, was well attended by the majority of the delegates from New Zealand. Out-going President Colin McLay presided over the minutes, reports and election of the new Council, before announcing the names of the two 2012 NZMSS Award recipients, introducing an update of the Society Rules for approval by the AGM, and confirming the venues for the 2013 and 2014 annual conferences as Waikato and Canterbury universities, respectively.

NZMSS was pleased to be able to encourage and support a large number of students to attend this ‘overseas’ conference and is extremely grateful to the organisations that provided sponsorship for student travel and prizes for AMSA-NZMSS 2012, namely MPI (Ministry for Primary Industries), NIWA (National Institute for Water and Atmosphere), The Royal Society of New Zealand, Antarctica New Zealand, and NHNZ (Natural History New Zealand).

Also contributing significantly to the success, both scientific and financial, of the conference were two major sponsors - the Cawthron Institute, sponsor of the Welcome Function, and the Department of Conservation, sponsor of one of the keynote speakers - as well as Otago University Marine Department and Sirtrack Ltd, which both had Exhibition Stands at the conference.

“AMSA-NZMSS 2012” was a success in terms of the number and variety of abstracts offered and papers presented, the number of delegates who attended, and in managing to come in on the positive side of the budget. In the words of the Chair of the Organising Committee Dr Tim Lynch, “in many ways our Kiwi cousin’s share common research questions, species, funding dilemmas and even personnel, with a surprising number of scientists developing careers across institutes in both countries. Our tradition of joint conferences provides a great way to maintain and develop this already close relationship.”

The student prize winners and the titles of their winning presentations at “AMSA-NZMSS 2012” were as follows:-

NIWA Prize for Best Student Oral Presentation: Winner: Katherine Baer Jones (Otago University) --- Modelled biological and physico-chemical controls on observed pCO₂ across the coastally oriented Subtropical Frontal Zone.

Runner Up: Kirsten Rodgers (Auckland University) --- A novel system for measuring the photosynthetic rates of kelp and its application to studying current and future stressors on kelp forest ecosystems.

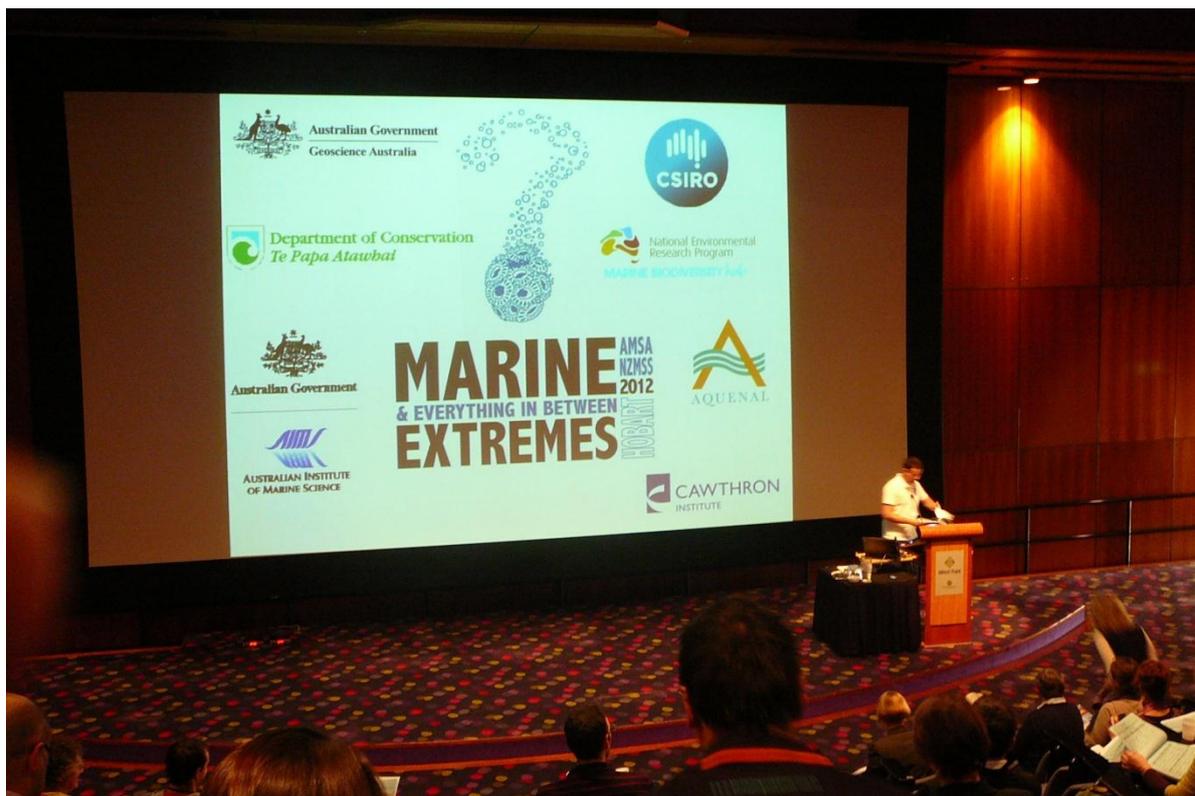
NIWA Prize for Best Student Poster Presentation: Winner: Esther Stuck (Otago University) --- Effects of ocean acidification on intracellular pH and development: comparisons between tropical, temperate and polar echinoderm species.

Runner Up: Rocio Suarez (Otago University) --- The ecological role of the invasive kelp *Undaria pinnatifida* in southern New Zealand.

Ministry for Primary Industries Prize for the Student Oral Paper making Best Use of Quantitative Methodology: Winner: Gayle Sommerville (Otago University) --- Exploring harvest regulations of New Zealand abalone via population modelling.

Ministry for Primary Industries Prize for the Poster Paper making Best Use of Quantitative Methodology: Winner: Darcy Webber (Victoria University) --- Broad scale management in spatially heterogeneous fisheries. Does it matter?

(Report dated 13th August 2012)



A plenary session of "AMSA-NZMSS 2012" about to get underway

A photo album comprising almost 400 pictures taken during the conference (but mostly at the gala dinner) can be accessed at [AMSA-NZMSS 2012 Hobart](#) . The album includes photos of the student prize winners collecting their certificates from President Dr Colin McLay (#6 Gayle Sommerville, #8

Darcy Webber, #12 Rocio Suarez, #14 Esther Stuck, # 18 Kirsten Rodgers – Katherine Baer Jones was not present), as well as Mary Livingston (photo #19, for John Booth) and Malcolm Clark (#21) collecting their NZMSS Award certificates. Other photos show Scott Nodder and Dennis Gordon giving their keynote addresses, symposium keynote speakers, chairpersons and other officials undertaking their duties, and including the iconic ‘image of the conference’ (#2 in the album) of Organising Committee Chair Tim Lynch, with his cow bell used to signify the end of tea or lunch and to summon delegates to the next session of the conference. New Zealanders are well represented in the numerous photos of delegates enjoying the decorations, dining, dancing and the music of ‘Rektango’, during the gala dinner on the final night of the conference.