



ISPP

International Society for Plant Pathology

(Professor Lodovica Gullino, President)



Report to ISPP from an Associated Society for 2008-2013.

Please complete your report using this proforma

Return the completed report by email to Peter Williamson, Business Manager, ISPP (businessmanager@isppweb.org) by 31 July, 2013

Name of Society. Australasian Plant Pathology Society **Established: 1969**

Web address for Society. <http://www.appsnet.org/>

Name (s) of personnel preparing report. Dr. Elaine Davison (President), Dr. Peter Williamson, (Business Manager), Professor Richard Falloon (Past President APPS).

Nominated Officers. Is the list for your society on the ISPP website correct? (http://www.isppweb.org/about_associated_eng.asp) **Yes** * (*strike out whichever is not applicable) *(If Yes there is no need to list them here. If listing is not correct, please list here President, Secretary, Treasurer, Business Manager/Office and ISPP councillors (address, telephone and email contacts).*

Will a Society member be making corrections to the ISPP entry for your society on-line? Yes/*.

Society Contact: Email businessmanager@appsnet.org

Society membership. ...475 members in 2010; ...576 members in 2011;412 members in 2012.

Report for 2008-2013.

- *Society Activities and publications.* The Australasian Plant Pathology Society (APPS) is dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge of plant pathology and its practice in Australasia. Australasia is interpreted in the broadest sense to include not only Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, but also the Indian, Pacific and Asian regions. Although the Society's activities are mainly focused on the Australasian region, many of the activities of our members are of international importance and significance.

The Society has a regional structure, with each region organising local events such as meetings and workshops.

The Society owns two journals that are published by Springer: Australasian Plant Pathology and Australasian Plant Disease Notes. It also publishes Pathogen of the Month, featuring a pathogen of local importance.

- *Society Conferences and Workshops.* APPS organises a biennial conference and satellite workshops. It also has a number of special interest groups that hold biennial meetings. These special interest groups meetings are the Australasian Soilborne Diseases Symposium, Virology Workshop, Australian Association of Nematologists meeting, and Molecular and Physiological Plant Pathology meeting.
- *Other plant pathology conferences in Region.* APPS is a founder member of the Asian Association of Societies for Plant Pathology. APPS jointly hosted a conference with AASPP in Darwin (Australia) in 2011. The conference theme was "New Frontiers in Plant Pathology for Asia and Oceania." This conference was attended by about 400 delegates from 34 countries and included large contingent from China, with other delegates from across South East Asia, including Vietnam,

Cambodia and Laos. A number of delegates from South East Asia were sponsored by the Crawford Fund. This is a non-profit, non-government organisation, which depends on grants and donations. It is dedicated to raising awareness of the benefits of International Agricultural Research within developing countries and Australia.

- *Collaboration with other societies in the Region.* APPS is keen to promote scientific exchanges with other plant pathology societies in the region, and to this end has a formal agreement with the Phytopathological Society of Japan. This is being developed as a student exchange program, with each society sponsoring two students to work for a short time in the other country. So far two students from Japan worked in Australia in 2011, while two students from Australia worked in Japan in 2012.

APPS members support many of the many international meetings in the region and will be well represented at the ICPP in Beijing in 2013.

- *Plant Pathology in the Region.* Australia and New Zealand are island nations and both are important exporters of agricultural produce. They have particular concerns about biosecurity, as many pests and pathogens that impact on crops and plants in natural ecosystems in other parts of the world do not occur in these countries. Australia and New Zealand have a wide latitudinal spread, so that a vast range of crops can be grown. These include tropical crops, such as mangoes and bananas, those that are important in Mediterranean regions such as citrus and grapes, to those from temperate regions such as apples, stone fruit and berries. The main commodities however are grains and pulses, and are grown for export, domestic consumption and stockfeed.

Australia and New Zealand recognise that their disease-free status is an important asset for trade and are dedicated to maintaining this. One aspect of this is ensuring that there are sufficient plant pathologists and entomologists to service the needs of agriculture. In 2012, APPS, together with the Australasian Entomological Society and the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre commissioned a survey of Plant Pathology and Entomology capability. This used similar questions to a similar survey in 2006. This latest survey has shown that the age profile of plant pathologists and entomologists has shifted upwards, with obvious concerns about the future availability of experienced staff who can service these industries in the future. The report can be viewed on http://www.appsnet.org/public/Survey/APPS_AES_Survey_2012.pdf

- *Funding opportunities.* There are a number of funding opportunities that support plant pathology in Australia. Australian agricultural industries pay a levy that is used to support the industry. These are used to fund research and development, marketing, promotion, plant (and animal) health programs and residue testing. The money raised through levies and charges is matched by the Australian Government.

There are also funding opportunities to support plant pathology in neighbouring countries. This is through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the Crawford Fund and AusAid.

Plant pathology in the Region Served by the Society 2008-2013

Biosecurity Australia and New Zealand, like other island nations, has to juggle issues of biosecurity and trade, which are particularly important because both have reputations for exporting large volumes of high quality produce.

In 2008 the Australian Government conducted a major review of its biosecurity system. The resulting report 'One biosecurity: A Working Partnership' (the Beale Review) advocated clarification of the roles and responsibilities of government and industry, a legal framework underpinning a national approach for managing responses to incursions, a framework for risk analysis, and the skills and resources to support these changes. These changes are underway.

The Australian Government has responsibility for pre-border and border biosecurity, including quarantine and export certification. Australian states and territories and plant industries have a direct role in post-border biosecurity. The plant industries contribute through Plant Health Australia (PHA), a not-for-profit public company, formed by government and the major plant production industries. More

information about these changes can be viewed at <http://www.daff.gov.au> and <http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/>

Research in plant biosecurity in Australia is coordinated through the Plant Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre. Its mission includes undertaking research, education and training, enhancing awareness of biosecurity issues, and community and enterprise development. More information about the PBCRC can be viewed at <http://www.crcplantbiosecurity.com.au>

A serious incursion of Australia's biosecurity occurred in 2010 when *Puccinia psidii* sensu lato was identified in New South Wales. *P. psidii* infects members of the Myrtaceae, one of the dominant families of the Australian flora including eucalypts. It has the unusual attribute for a rust of having a very wide host range. Since it was first recorded it has spread to other states in eastern Australia, to date it has not been recorded in New Zealand.

There have also been incursions of pathogens into New Zealand that have resulted in severe diseases of important commodities. Examples are bacterial canker of kiwifruit, red needle cast of pine trees and zebra chip of potato. These incursions have greatly increased the focus on implementation of effective quarantine regulations, both from the perspective of advice to regulatory authorities, and in the development of new tools for disease risk assessment and prediction, and pathogen detection. As well, there has been rapid expansion of research effort attempting to quickly develop effective disease management strategies for the resulting diseases.

Grains industry in Australia. The most important agricultural industry in Australia is the grain industry (coarse cereals, pulses and oilseeds) producing about 35 million tonnes annually which is grown on about 20 million ha. Financial support for this industry is through a levy and matched funding from the Australian Government, and is administered through the Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC). GRDC is responsible for the planning and investing in this industry. It oversees the research, development and extension, with the aim of improving production, sustainability and profitability in this industry. It coordinates research undertaken at universities, in CSIRO, and in state departments of agriculture. A recent review has developed a National Grains RD&E Strategy that emphasises the importance of developing nation centres for basic and strategic research, such as those in plant pathology. An example is the Australian Cereal Rust Control program which has a national centre in Sydney, whilst development and extension are delivered locally. The report can be viewed at <http://www.grdc.com.au/About-Us/Primary-Industries-Steering-Committee>