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The Society traces its origin to the *Philosophical Society of Australasia* founded in Sydney in 1821. The Society exists for “*the encouragement of studies and investigations in Science Art Literature and Philosophy*”: publishing results of scientific investigations in its Journal and Proceedings; conducting monthly meetings; awarding prizes and medals; and by liaison with other learned societies within Australia and internationally. Membership is open to any person whose application is acceptable to the Society. Subscriptions for the Journal are also accepted. The Society welcomes, from members and non-members, manuscripts of research and review articles in all branches of science, art, literature and philosophy for publication in the Journal and Proceedings.

Editorial

Academic publishing has undergone a revolution over the past decade. The time has come to decide whether the *Journal and Proceedings* will follow the revolution, or remain a niche publication only known to a few. The J&P has been going for over 150 years now. It hasn't remained entirely a print-only journal. We now publish online, through the RSNSW website, well in advance of the print edition. Past issues are available there electronically, as far back as the beginning of the 3rd millennium.

This doesn't provide for indexing, however. Papers will not be picked up by search engines except in special cases, and so scholars are unlikely to come across the journal when undertaking research. For the past 2 years the J&P has been indexed through Informit, which means that new articles can be picked up in library searches. Informit is, though, a subscription service, so access is not available to all. Fortunately all Australian universities and government agencies subscribe, making the J&P freely available to a wide audience within Australia.

All past issues of the J&P are also electronically available via the Biodiversity Heritage Library in the USA, who very kindly scanned every issue, going back to the first in 1862. This is an invaluable resource. Moreover, through optical character recognition, text versions of all volumes are available for searching. However, it still requires considerable effort to find material that might be of interest.

These advances, useful as they are, do not bring us into the era of modern publishing.

If the Journal is to regain prominence as a publication of standing, it needs to do more.

We would need to move to a new platform for publication. There are two principal routes in front of us. The first is through a commercial publisher. They handle all the administrative details, and make the Journal available through their own platforms. Academic libraries subscribe to these, providing a world-wide audience. There is no cost to the Society, indeed it is possible for Journal to make money via these subscriptions. Sound too good to be true? Well yes it is, for the J&P has far too small a subscriber list to be financially worthwhile for a publisher. There is also the issue, strongly debated in academic circles, of the high profit margins being made by publishers, when the real work is being done by the Society and the authors.

The other alternative is through Open Access publishing. Here the RSNSW would pay for every article published, but this ensures that they remain freely accessible to all. Editorial and a variety of production services come with Open Access publishing, also necessary for improving the way publication is managed and distributed. Open Access is the altruistic method of publication, but will involve a cost to the Society. Not that our current method of publication is cost free either. The Society will need to decide on a way forward for our Journal to remain relevant 150 years hence.

Michael Burton
Hon. Secretary (Editorial)
30 June, 2015

