

## Editorial 2004

The past year has been a dynamic and exciting one at *Marine and Freshwater Research*. The new editorial team has settled in and some changes have already been implemented to develop the Journal. An important focus has been on improving manuscript turnaround – primary decision times now consistently average under 8 weeks and acceptance to publication is around 12 weeks. These times benefit authors and ensure that readers can access the latest results at the earliest opportunity. The new, distinctive look of *MFR* is a reflection of the positive developments on the editorial and production sides in the last year: authors now receive a free PDF reprint upon publication that can be printed, or forwarded to colleagues. Also, authors now have the opportunity to publish colour figures on the web and black and white in print.

*MFR* is strengthening its commitment to the scientific community through links with learned societies and my visits to annual conferences and institutions. One benefit so far has been the special offer of reduced subscription rates to members of the Australian Society for Limnology (ASL), which has been enthusiastically received. Also, prizes were awarded for the 'Best Interdisciplinary Study' at the 2003 ASL and Australian Marine Science Association conferences. I congratulate the winners, Stephanie Moore (University of NSW) and Dan Borg (University of Melbourne), for their fine presentations. This award highlights that *MFR* is one of a rare number of journals that is truly interdisciplinary.

An outcome of the positive changes that have occurred is that the number of submissions to *MFR* continues to grow: 20% more were received in 2003 compared to the previous year. *MFR* will continue to develop in the coming year to ensure the best service to authors and only the best papers reach our readers and subscribers. From Issue 2 of the current Volume, *MFR* will be available as full-text HTML online, which means articles will be easy to browse and fully searchable through the web and search engines. Later in the year, we move to an online submission and editorial management system, which will further reduce turnaround times.

The editorial team at *MFR* works closely with our Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC), whose guidance and assistance is invaluable. After years of service, Professors Stuart Bunn and Bruce Phillips and Drs Peter Doherty and

Chris Francis retired from the EAC. The unfortunate passing of Associate Professor Peter Holloway was marked in a moving obituary, published in the Journal last year (Vol. 54(6), pp. 585–586). Several new EAC members have been welcomed aboard and have already made a significant contribution. They are Professors Peter Fairweather, David Hamilton and Mike Kingsford, Associate Professor Norman Hall and Dr Philip Boyd. In conjunction with our International Advisory Panel, we have access to advice from members of the scientific community of the highest standing and from across the broadest geographic area.

The Journal could not function without the assistance of referees and their contribution is much appreciated. I thank the more than 400 experts that were consulted during the year. Of course, thanks are also extended to the authors that submitted their work to the Journal in the last year and I look forward to receiving manuscripts from those yet to submit.

Over the next 12 months and beyond, the content of *MFR* will continue to grow and improve. In the coming year, two special issues – one on cephalopod growth and the other on tropical river ecology – will be published. A special issue devoted to the application of fish otolith research will be published in 2005. These *MFR* special issues will be focussed and timely volumes of related work, required reading by researchers and serve as texts in their respected fields. In addition, I plan to publish mini-reviews on cutting-edge topics and I aim to add other features to the publishing armoury of *MFR*. I believe *MFR* is on its way to becoming one of the top aquatic science journals and I hope you will support me in that endeavour by sending your best manuscripts to the Journal at publishing.mfr@csiro.au.

If you have any comments, queries or suggestions, please contact:

Dr Dugald McGlashan  
*Marine and Freshwater Research*  
**CSIRO PUBLISHING**  
PO Box 1139  
Collingwood 3066 Australia  
Fax: +61 (0)3 9662 7611

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