

Editorial

Changes – that is the best way to describe the situation at the *International Journal of Wildland Fire* these days.

One of the more noticeable changes is that the *IJWF* is going to six issues a year and will allow papers to be published in a more timely fashion. The journal went bimonthly in response to the rapid increase of interest in fire research in general and the *IJWF* specifically. When I started my term as Editor-in-Chief in 2002 submissions to the journal were in the 75–80 range per year during 2002–2004. Submissions jumped to 115 in 2005 and reached 163 in 2006. Early indications suggest that submissions will increase further in 2007. This rapid growth has caused some growing pains and a few papers have taken longer than I would have liked to go through the review process.

To address the increased workload and to address the broadening of topics in *IJWF* we have increased the number of Associate Editors by six to 33 in the past year. Also, to help alleviate the burden on reviewers we have asked Associate Editors to take more time to evaluate manuscripts at the beginning of the review process to ascertain if the papers are ready to be sent out to reviewers, or to be returned to the corresponding author and asked to address the shortcomings. We believe this pre-screening will be a more efficient approach for the review process.

Along with this rapid increase in submissions the Impact Factor (IF) has increased as well. IF, too often used as a proxy for quality, is a measure all journals need be aware of. *IJWF* now enjoys its highest ever IF result, at 1.810. The 2-year window assessed in an IF datum is always a difficulty for forestry-based research but the remarkable jump in ranking in the ‘forestry’ category, from 11th of 34 in 2005 to 4th of 36 in 2006, is a significant and meaningful reflection in the increased relevance of research published in *IJWF*.

IJWF is an *international* journal and in the last year we have had submissions from 21 countries. However, there is still a North American bias with just over 50% of the submissions coming from North America and the USA in particular. I would like to see more papers from fire researchers in Europe and Asia. The journal also receives papers on a wide variety of topics related to wildland fire and still receives a significant amount, 46% of submissions, in the traditional subjects of fire behaviour and fire ecology. I would like to see more submissions in the social sciences and more review papers.

What does the future hold for the *IJWF*? To answer this question, a good place to start may be to look at the past. The journal is what it is today because of the efforts of people like Mike Weber, Gwyn Richards, Kelvin Hirsch, Laurie Martinelli, Richard Hecker, Helena Piraino, many Associate Editors, numerous reviewers and even more numerous readers throughout the years. *IJWF* is the only international journal devoted solely to wildland fire and the future will be dependent on the readers, reviewers, Associate Editors, Editors, and CSIRO Publishing.

Lastly, there are more changes coming. First, OSPRey will be incorporated into our review and production process. OSPRey is an online submission and peer review system developed by Australia’s CSIRO Publishing and Canada’s NRC Press; associates of the Canadian Journal of Forest Research will be familiar with it. OSPRey will help streamline editorial processes and lighten the workload. Finally, my second term as Editor-in-Chief with the *IJWF* comes to an end at the beginning of 2008. It is time for a new person for Editor, and we are open to try new structures to deal with the increase in submissions. If you have ideas on this topic, or on any ideas to improve the *IJWF*, feel free to contact me. *IJWF* is comfortable with changes.

Mike Flannigan

Editor-in-Chief

International Journal of Wildland Fire

www.publish.csiro.au/journals/ijwf