

'Retiring President's AGM Report' by Noel Chiconi

It is with mixed emotions that I present to you my eighth and final AGM Presidents Report. Having not stood for re-election for the position of President I would like to take the opportunity to make some acknowledgements. Firstly congratulations to Sean Dillon your new President. Sean brings with him a sound background together with youth and enthusiasm with skills that are required for this position. I urge you to support Sean in his role as President in the same way Councillors and Members have done for me.

As I pass the 'President's baton' onto Sean it is with pleasure that I do so in respect to our financial position reflecting a bank balance of \$500,000 together with assets such as our office building and equipment which puts us over the \$600,000 mark this is up from the \$88,000 held in reserve in 2001 and when we were operating out of a room beside the kitchen in the secretary June Lingard's house. We are also up from approx 120 to 260 affiliated committees and 1800 to 8,000 members including casuals.

I would like to quickly add that this has not been a sole effort on my part the whole council can take great pride in this achievement as many people have put effort in many ways for this wonderful out come. As well, before I took over the position of President the ACA had enjoyed a continuous upward trend for a long period of time this was due to a lot of hard work done by previous administrations. I am sure with good management this trend will continue into the future.

The ACA is truly an Australian body now representing committees and members in most states and Territories. The expansion into NSW, WA and TAS has been rewarding as well as uniting a large portion of the campdraft sector.

Leadership over the last eight years has required a balance of fairness and firmness – which at times have required a certain amount of change as more committees have come on board – committees, members, councillors want to be listened to not told what and how to do it however the ACA does have a strong base line that will not be compromised.

Public Liability Insurance, new secretary, compulsory competitor membership, NLIS, EI, EADRA, horse councils have been challenges which have arisen and been met head on in some cases, all haven't been easy situations to deal with but Council, committees and members have been resilient and patient and we have had desirable outcomes in the end.

The defeat of the proposed Levy Collections Bills in the Federal Parliament in August last year was a major achievement largely due to the efforts of the ACA and namely Sean Dillon and Harvey Walters. These bills were at the time seen as unfair by the ACA and others which have proven to be correct as semi-government and government bodies who would be implicated in administering this legislation have now identified the total lack of research and consultation on this issue which would involve the mandatory micro-chipping of all horses in Australia, it was simply going to be unworkable and impractical in its anticipated form.

When endeavouring to change, divert or influence government policy from afar afield as the ACA it is a great challenge, one of my fundamental principles in attempting to do so has been to keep our credibility in tack in the process and I believe this has largely been achieved which will hold us in good stead for future involvement and negotiations with government departments and the like.

With the added pressures of having to deal with influences from outside the ACA such as the Levy Collection Bills and Ambulance costs etc, the delegation to the various sub-committees of the day to day ACA issues has required the people involved to accept more responsibility, those people have risen to the occasion without hesitation which in turn has proven to be very effective.

A lot of the credit for the success of the ACA in recent times lies firmly with the ACA secretary, firstly with the legendary June Lingard who was secretary for 22 years the last 3 of which were in my time as President and our current secretary Robyn Paine. The secretary is the bottleneck in the ACA between the combination of committees, members, institutions, businesses and the ACA administration. So much hinges on the commitment and attitude of the secretary in their ability to exercise commonsense and fairness amongst all the other things we expect of them. June and Robyn have been respected far and wide for these attributes and the ACA has been the overall beneficiary, both have both been a pleasure to work with and have made my job easier from the point of view that I haven't had to look over my shoulder or theirs, the focus has always been on the road ahead.

The ACA has maintained (and I hope will continue to do so) the role of Secretary as opposed to a CEO, this has primarily been to avoid the situation of a one person dictatorship over committees, members and council. The President as well as the Finance and Administration sub-committee work closely with the Secretary on administration and office issues which clearly is the preferred option in a well balanced operation.

Councillors and Members need to be aware that as we face new challenges, some of which will be beyond our control and with continued growth we need to exercise care in measured proportions regards management however most of all common sense and fairness has to prevail as the core principals to future of the ACA as has been the culture in the past (I hope those words will be remembered well into the future).

One of the greater challenges that is emerging apart from government intervention in the horse industry and their willingness to tax is one derived from our growing pains and that is to accommodate members fairly in the nomination process for our campdrafts. This future process as I see it will be out sourced from the committees and the ACA in order to place the responsibility on the competitor to have themselves organized.

To the Major Sponsors I commend you for your commitment during this economic down turn your determination to remain committed with your sponsorship dollars is appreciated

and I would assume that it is a sign of your faith in our organization to be a benefit to you as well. Not only have our current Major Sponsors remained loyal but we have also gained another Major Sponsor this year, Reid Rural, Thank you to each one of you for your belief in the ACA.

The ACA now has a new constitution which is a makeover of the previous constitution, it has been in the making for a while however very little changes for the day to day activities of the ACA.

The ACA council and its members have been have been part of my everyday life over the past eight years and I have enjoyed the experience emencealy. This year we see quite a number of current councillors retiring hence a replacement of those people with new faces.

Thank you to the retiring councillors for your contribution and the new people for putting their hand up and having a go and being part of a decision making process which at times is not easy. Being a councillor means commitment on a number of fronts such as being prepared to travel long distances to meetings, being prepared to back your word on members behalf in a debate, being prepared to accept the decision of the majority when a vote doesn't go your way, accept then that you have to be part of the team and support the decision made by the majority these are some of the attributes that have made the council and its members strong and respected over a long period of time. These people give their time completely free of charge including travel, the people who do this for no reward I believe are doing it for the right reasons and that is one of the fundamental reasons why we have a strong council.

At the risk of singling out one person for commendation above others who is retiring from council and I believe is worthy of special mention is Mary Ann Atthow. She has given service to council longer than most can remember (over 20 years) some of that time as a Vice-President. Mary Ann's original involvement was brought about by the merging of the SEQ as it was known to most (South East Queensland Campdraft Association which she was very much a part of) into the ACA which was a transition that wasn't instant and was negotiated over a period of time. Mary Ann has certainly always stood up for what she has believed in, never afraid to have an opinion and has served her members well over a long period of time, Thank you Mary Ann.

In closing I will just say some simple words, it has been a privilege to be entrusted with the position of President of this great association by members for the last eight years and it has been a pleasure to do so, Thank you.

Noel Chiconi

Retiring ACA President.