



THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

ABN 40 008 612 664

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN, MARK BONSER, AO, CSC, TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH ON SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2020.

OVERVIEW OF 2020

I am delighted to report that your Branch committee members continue to do a sterling job in organising events, providing patrons to the recruit squads at the WA Police Academy, encouraging more nominations in the Order and, looking to new projects, such as with EdConnect, through which the members might continue to contribute to their community.

I won't go through the committee list name by name. You know what they all do. I am especially thankful for their ongoing efforts as volunteers. Even though the association is a company, it is not BHP, and this is always taken into account at Branch level before introducing new tasks and reporting requirements for these volunteers.

Of course, I must make special mention of, and thank, outgoing committee member Helen Smith and recently departed Treasurer Ian Williams for their significant contributions over the past years. Thank you both very much.

I am also pleased to report that our Regions continue to support those members choosing to be associated with them. The convenors, Jan Savage and Barry House, are doing a great job in both sustaining and growing their regional activities, supported by our regional liaison officer Margaret Nunn.

In terms of the number of members, the WA Branch of the association grew again last year. We currently have 703 members and, I expect these numbers to grow as more awardees from the 2020 Australia Day list join.

There were 54 very worthy West Australians on the 2020 Australia Day list. While this was an average size list, it was smaller than the 74 and 64 on the two previous lists in 2019. Unfortunately, not enough West Australians are nominated relative to our proportion of the national population.

17 of the recent awardees (only 31.5%) were women. This is quite a low number and, is well below the national average. Clearly, there is much more work to be done to encourage nominations for this half of the State's population. There remain many women in Western Australia who deserve recognition for their contributions to the community, the State and the nation.

I encourage all of the members to consider nominating someone you know who is deserving of an award.

Of course, member numbers translate into dollars. And, as you will hear from the Treasurer, the Branch is in a sound financial position. Net assets have increased to some \$50,000. While these funds belong to the whole association, they are available to the Branch so it can support the purpose and objects of the association at a State level. Your committee has considered some options for this over the last year but, has yet to decide a way ahead.

Of course, it is not just up to the committee to come up with all the ideas about how the Branch might make proper use of available funds. Additional suggestions from the members in the form of a simple business case would also be very welcome. Please give this some thought.

OTHER MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Many things are happening outside the Branch. At the last Branch committee meeting, we were asked for committee input to some options for the structure and underlying principles of a proposed new Constitution and By-Laws.

Having considered the matter carefully, the Branch committee agreed some recommendations for our Branch Nominated Director (who is also chair of the Constitution Working Group) to take to the Board. These were:

- Maintaining a Constitution as the head of Governance.
- The Constitution to be based on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission template.

- Where the National, Branch and Regional levels have similar Governance requirements (i.e., general meetings, election of officers, financial management, rights and obligations, etc) that these be consolidated in the Constitution for the purposes of brevity and simplicity.
- In addition to other significant matters requiring a head of Governance, the Constitution must include the rights of and, protections for the Members.
- Maintaining By-Laws to give effect to (procedurally implement) the Constitution.
- Ensuring the By-Laws are NOT inconsistent with the Constitution.
- Having no other Governance documents below the level of the By-Laws.
- Rationalising the current By-Laws to move matters that are rightly a head of Governance into the Constitution and simplifying their language.
- Reducing the number of Governance documents and avoiding duplication by incorporating the relevant elements of the Branch Rules and any other Policy Documents into either the Constitution (Governance) or the By-Laws (implementation).

The Branch committee also showed its appreciation for the significant efforts of Professor Robin Watts who is the Chair of the Constitution Working Group. I expect our National Chairman will have some more to say about this important work, later in the agenda.

CONCLUSION

Finally, I have very much enjoyed the work we do at Branch level and, greatly appreciated the support of all the Branch committee members and volunteers who ensure the Branch functions effectively and efficiently.

Of course, we can always do better. And, one of the best ways to enable change for the better is to regularly renew the membership of committees. Fresh ideas and disparate views should be encouraged, along with freedom of speech and open debate. This of course should be second nature in an association like the OAA.

I wish you all well for the future.

Thank you.

Mark Bonser AO, CSC.