**PRESIDENT’S REPORT AGM 2025**

This is the third and last report I am making to the AGM. In the past they’ve not been particularly spellbinding. This year will be no exception.

I’m stepping down simply because three years is enough. As a former president said to me recently: “You just run out of oomph”. And you do. I said in my first report I had two aims as the new president.

One was to focus on our core work, which is delivering courses to all of you, as opposed to trying to shake the tree or leave my mark in some way.

The second was to make sure things continue to tick over smoothly.

Not surprisingly, I am going to claim some small measure of success on those two fronts.

And when I say small measure, I mean small measure. Because what I did achieve, I achieved as part of a team.

And not just the Management Team, but also with the help of the Office Team under both Marg Nicol and Michele Patten for most of the time, the Newsletter Team under Michele again (a very valuable contributor to our organisation, as is Marg), and the Program Team under Jane Thomson.

As Garry Clear, our vice president, said to me recently about the Management Team, teamwork is all important. And I’ve been blessed these past three years with a bunch of very team-oriented colleagues. Meaning that no-one is in it for personal benefit or self-promotion but, instead, has the good of the organisation at the forefront of their mind, and is happy to compromise to achieve the desired result.

So what can I report to you?

Well, membership has continued to creep up this year—and post COVID. We had 430 members at the end of 2024, compared to 416 at the end of 2023, and 390 at the end of 2022.

I guess the main takeaway is that our numbers are not declining or staying steady, but rising, albeit very modestly.

Financially, we ran a paper deficit this past year, but we still had more money in the bank at the end of 2024 than we had at the end of 2023, a buffer roughly equivalent to a year’s costs, which is a healthy buffer. This may have been helped by the fact that we increased the annual fee this year from $30 to $35 in order to cover cost increases and provide a more secure financial base for the future. Even so, our annual fee is still one of the lowest in Australia.

Having mentioned our finances, I would like to thank Judy Brand for her very reassuring stewardship of our money these past years. Thank you Judy.

As for our courses, we’re still running nearly 40 courses at the start of this year, about the same as the number of courses that has prevailed over the last few years. Finally, the year has been marked by a relative dearth of volunteers to step up and take the pressure off those who have served on our committees for years. Some kind people did finally come forward, but searches for volunteers will continue to be a feature of our Management Team activity. I want to finish by thanking the people who are retiring from the Management Team along with me.

First, our vice president, Garry Clear. Garry has been a rock, and gives careful and dispassionate consideration to every issue we’ve had to deal with. Garry has been on the Management Team for nine years or so, If I’ve run out of oomph, how must he be feeling! Thank you so much Garry on behalf of everyone for your huge effort and support.

Secondly, I want to thank Roger Harris. Roger has brought a level head and considered approach to the table, much like Garry. Thank you very much Roger.

So that’s it for me. I hope the new President will be as lucky with her new team as I have been.

Thank you.

Paul Strutynski