

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First of all, I would like to wish all of our members and their families a very happy and safe New Year. That said, for folk in the Mackay area that is already difficult due to the floods. We probably still have members who are still feeling the direct and indirect effects of the NSW and Northern Victoria floods from late last year. These effects also extend into South Australia as the flood waters continue to find their way into the Murray system and slowly move downstream. People keep talking about the new normal, post Covid, but I'm not sure anyone actually knows what that will actually look like. As I have stated in this column before I am sure that the DGSA will be affected by the events of the past three years, but precisely what those changes will look like and how we, as a Society, will be shaped by those changes remains to be seen.

The April AGW will contain the Office Bearer Reports which will provide various comparison points with the past.

Things like our membership numbers, our financial results and activity levels in areas such as registrations, transfers and exports. The only number I have seen so far is our final membership numbers for 2022. After decades of slow decline in our membership we saw an increase in 2020 compared to 2019. The following year, 2021, we saw another increase in numbers compared to the year before.

Our final number of members in 2022 was identical to that at the end of 2021, although we have seen members leave and new members join. In the circumstances I feel that maintaining our membership levels is probably a very good result, but we do need to continue to provide reasons why folk should consider joining the DGSA, and beyond that, why would they be better off as a member of the DGSA.

Staying on the subject of memberships, every year we experience up to 40% of our members not renewing by the due date, and undoubtedly there are many reasons for this. Some of you may have wondered why memberships are due at such a messy time of the year, i.e. around the Christmas / New Year period. Why don't we move the date to a more agreeable time of the year? The Directors have pondered on this issue a number of times and in the end have always resolved to leave the date the same. This is driven in large part by one requirement in the Commonwealth Corporations Act that governs what we can and cannot do as a Company. That requirement is that the Annual General Meeting must take place no more than five months after the end of the financial year. For Directors from all States to physically come together for two days of meetings is only really practicable when their goats require the least care. Given the differences in kidding seasons North to South and to a lesser degree East to West, the consensus is that late May or June is the best time for these meetings. Our Articles currently require that the annual physical meeting of the Directors take place immediately after the AGM is concluded. The Directors have also considered the need for physical meetings when platforms like Zoom would be cheaper and the Directors wouldn't have to find others to look after their stock for a couple of days. The last time this was discussed the Directors were of the view that the physical meetings led to better discussions and provide easy opportunities for small group discussions at any time. We will continue to review how we hold our AGM and physical Directors meetings – although the current requirement to hold a physical meeting can only be removed by a change to Article 56. The West Australian Branch moved to remove the word "physical" from this Article last year, but that motion was not carried. That doesn't mean the topic cannot or should not be raised ever again, it purely reflected, in my opinion, that, on balance, our members were content to leave things as they are for now. So, if you have ever wondered why our Financial Year starts on 1<sup>st</sup> January, you now know the reason.

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