



President
Annual Report 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is my last report as President and Toowoomba Representative for this term. It seems only yesterday that we met in Brisbane and the elected representatives decided to take the RFBAQ into a different direction. The past should now be put to rest, yet not forgotten. Financially we have gone from a 1.103 Million Dollar loss to a profit in excess of \$100,000.00. These have been the collocation of our office and the call centre and the new internal staff processes have brought not only efficiencies but totally improved workplace communications. It is really pleasing to see the teamwork in this environment.

The shedding of our retail arm and now the outsourcing of supplies to a third party provider has removed a logistics nightmare. The product recall has been effective and removed as many of the faulty electrical goods as possible. This will continue for some time yet I feel the worst is over in relation to this issue. Many have asked "Why did we get out of marketing?" The simple truth can now be told. In effect it was costing us more to store and ship the goods, than we were receiving for the sale price.

To be honest, when we started the rebuild of the RFBAQ, there was a serious credibility issue for our association. I believe by embracing social media, including face book we started to really get our message across. The elected representatives have worked many long hours at grass roots level to spread the word, throughout the brigades we represent, that change was coming and would continue. The opening up of SEM minutes and financial statements to scrutiny each month has brought with it transparency and a sense of openness. The measure of our success sits here today, a full complement of representatives for every District in the state.

Our first venture, into campaign mode was the removal of the MEO positions. Through this many lessons were learnt and were to prepare us for what was to come. The sacking of 55 of our paid staff brought with it many challenges. How long could we actually survive in the field, media engagement and negotiation with other interested parties to only mention a few. At the general meeting in Rockhampton saw the birth of "Operation Yellow" this was a critical turning point for the RFBAQ. You the elected representatives displayed leadership skills and dedication to a just cause that personally made me very proud to state "I belong to the RFBAQ".

Then came "Operation Fair Go" the magnitude of this task, didn't daunt a single state representative. I will always remember the media training, via the internet and telephone and the mature rules of engagement that were developed by you at this time. You represented us with dignity and professionalism. With some of the other issues, in Queensland at this time, it would have been very easy for this operation to have become completely unstuck. You held your ground whilst others fell by the wayside. Yes, we hit some speed bumps but they only intensified our commitment to the ultimate goal. In the history of our association, this was one of the largest activations for our brigades to very publicly and loudly get our message across to the people of Queensland. The conduct of this operation was truly the benchmark that the RFBAQ had come of age.

Following the election of the LNP, came the promised Malone Review. This was the largest consultative process, with volunteers, across the state. Led by Ted Malone, the volunteer fire-fighter from Mount. Christian Rural Fire Brigade, and member for Mirani and assisted by Brian Cifuentes, Andrew Houley, Kerry Millard and myself. We spoke to in excess to 1500 volunteers and received 256 written submissions. This resulted in the publication of Ted's report and his subsequent elevation to Assistant Minister, to oversee the implementation of those recommendations. I will speak further in relation to this matter, later during the weekend, during the first meeting of the new state executive.



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The RFBAQ has assisted with the formation of the new State Emergency Service Association of Queensland. This was a milestone in the growth process for us as well. There is a clear understand that we do not operate in isolation and are part of the wider volunteer community. I believe that this is the way of the future. Each organisation, retaining their identity, yet being prepared to work side by side to protect and support our communities throughout the state.

It is my intention, to personally and publicly thank those who have been of so supportive during my presidency, later this weekend. The full story of the regeneration of the Rural Fire Brigade Association may never be told yet as I now look into your faces I can honestly say "We made made a difference"

Thank You.

Could my report now be accepted.