



General Manager
Annual General Meeting / General Meeting Report
September 2015

The 2014/2015 financial year has been one that has exemplified that the RFBAQ is three distinct businesses within the one association.

The running of the five Art Unions per year is where the vast majority of the income for the RFBAQ is derived. With these Art Unions we have the associated costs of supplying 20% of the retail value of ticket sales in prizes which amounts to \$600,000 per annum. In addition to this is the cost of telephone calls of @\$180,000 and postage of @\$85,000 and the plethora of other significant costs associated with making on average 27,000 connected telephone conversations per week.

With 80% of Queensland in drought, many of our supporters in regional and rural areas are more concerned with putting food on the table than purchasing an Art Union ticket, this of course has a flow on effect in the towns that service and support primary producers with very little income coming into those associated businesses.

Coinciding with this is the massive downturn in mining activity in Queensland. The flow on effect for the association has been massive, with many previous supporters now having moved away from these areas and those who remain having significantly reduced income and not as free to purchase tickets or needing to make tax deductible donations.

Wage increases for contact centre agents granted by legislation have been offset internally by the redundancy of an administration position and not backfilling another contact supervisor position made free by a resignation. This coupled with reducing the number of issues of Smoke Signals from three per year to two and a number of other internal cost cuttings has forecast a saving of \$115,000.

These savings will be almost totally absorbed through the contact centre wage increases, increases in the cost of postage and contact centre phone calls.

The Operation Managers report contains further specific Contact Centre operating performance and future savings.

The annual report for the other outward facing sections of the RFBAQ are the obverse of the above.

Over the last 12 months the Association (which the contact centre funds) has had a fruitful year with a successful and transparent RFBAQ General Election concluding at the 2014 AGM/GM, with a subsequent seamless and transparent leadership change after the passing of Mike Garrahy AFSM.



A State election campaign was undertaken with the RFBAQ being one of the very few organisations that received written undertakings from almost all registered Political Parties. This action stood the association well with the Presumptive Legislation debate.

The RFBAQ has conducted by-elections for retiring representatives as well as for the three new RFBAQ District Representatives to mirror the three new RFSQ Area Offices.

Over the past financial year the RFBAQ has made almost \$200,000 available to brigades through grant funding, this is a significant increase over the previous year where \$80,000 was gifted in grants.

The third arm of the association business is the lobbying arm, which speaks for itself in the outcomes achieved. Many other organisations / associations / unions outsource lobbying activities to third party providers, and not necessarily for a better outcome.

I believe that the current financial year will see a claw back of our financial position, as forecast in the conservative budget for 2015/16.

It is important to remember and promote that the RFBAQ is fully self-funded with no brigade subscription and no Federal, State or Local Government money. Our income is generated by fundraising through our Contact Centre which sells Art Union tickets, takes tax deductible donations and brigade specific donations.

In Queensland it would be very hard to find another organisation that does not charge membership fees, subscription, dues or some other levy to fund its primary functions; which for us is lobbying on behalf all Rural Fire Brigades.

In addition to this, the RFBAQ provides grants to brigades and volunteers in need from the money that it raises.

Again, it would be very hard to find a representative organisation that gives so much back to its membership while only asking that members participate in the representative electoral process.

In this the RFBAQ is unique and will continue to represent every Rural Fire Brigade in Queensland and support the 36,000 volunteer firefighters and RFSQ staff (where appropriate).