



**SHORTHAND REPORTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT PALM COVE, FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND
SATURDAY, 22 AUGUST 2009**

President's Report

I express unending thanks to Kathleen Jones for her assistance over the past two years. Words cannot describe Kathleen's range of skills, knowledge of procedures and total competence in matters relating not just to the association but to reporting per se.

Management Committee Members 2007 onwards:

President

Vice-president and immediate past president

Treasurer/Secretary and Public Officer

State representatives:

Western Australia – Belinda Corey (SRAA magazine Editor – resigned January 2008)

South Australia – Judy Pevreal

ACT – Trevor Fowler

Victoria – Trish Greig

Queensland – Jason Bradley

I offer sincere appreciation of management committee members for their accessibility, support, wisdom and input in emails and teleconferences. I could not have done without them.

SRAA Magazine

The lapse in producing the magazine has been regrettable but unavoidable. In July 2007, a magazine was prepared and sent to a trusted professional printer who had it in possession to complete presentation and layout, but who suffered a breakdown. The magazine material remained with the printer until December 2007 in the hope that, although delayed, it would be produced for distribution. Subsequently the material had to be retrieved. After that the Editor of the magazine was unable to continue in the role. The magazine material was handed to me. By that time the contents were stale and not suitable for distribution.

While the website is everything that it could be expected to be, and while e-information and contact was maintained through emails, the loss of the magazine has had a profound impact on membership and continuing membership input.

TAFE NSW court in court and parliamentary reporting

The association received information in December 2007 that the TAFE NSW reporting course, consisting of theory in the first year and speed development in the second year, would be discontinued and no further enrolments would be taken after the 2008 intake. Despite representations being made by the SRAA for the course to be continued, it will cease in December 2009. The reason given by TAFE New South Wales is that the progress of students through the course did not meet the goals and throughput benchmarks of TAFE NSW.

SRAA Website

In the absence of a magazine and the personnel to produce one, greater reliance than ever before was placed on the website. My thanks go to Michelle McIntyre, the association's website designer and administrator, for her design of the site, the addition of information and changes, and the continuing upgrade of presentation and design.

University of Queensland Research

In 2008 the SRAA embarked on a research project in conjunction with the University of Queensland to assess the neurological processes of high-speed shorthand writing. The results of the research will be presented at the conference on Sunday 23 August 2009.

2008 Sydney Regional Conference

On 14 November 2008 a regional conference was held and attended by 29 reporters and others working in the reporting field. Attendees came from South Australia, the ACT, Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. It was a highly lauded and successful conference. The program was especially well received:

Annabel Crabb (Journalist) - Insights into Political and Parliamentary Behaviour

Susan Butler (Editor of the Macquarie Dictionary) - Words, language and the dictionary's role

Jennifer Pas (Human Resources Consultant) - Job application and interview techniques

Adrian Kelly (TranscriptsPlus) - Demonstration of voice (mask) reporting.

Reporting Issues

The loss of government departmental support for the SRAA conference is indicative of changes that have worked against the SRAA's aims **at this stage** (that has not always been the case and the current position may change). It seems that the goals of government organisations do not include valuing high-speed shorthand writing or at least that the unique qualities of high productivity and reliability have been lost sight of in framing administration goals.

This has been reflected in a failure of government departments to provide professional development and sponsorship of staff members to attend conferences, coupled with a strict application of management policy in line with organisational goals. The phrase often used by middle managers and employers, which is indicative of this approach in relation to the acquisition of skills and knowledge through conferences and staff development, is "I do not require [anything more than has been contracted for in employment to meet the organisation's goals]". Conversely, employees who have broad-ranging problem solving and operational skills are preferred in recruitment. The two propositions are inherently contradictory.

The SRAA is combating this lack of appreciation of hallmark reporting skills by commissioning research and attempting to raise the profile and perception of reporting through wider exposure of SRAA programs through the legal and parliamentary systems.

Suzanne Mendra
President 2007-2009