

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2012 – 2013

The year since our last AGM seems to have passed very quickly, 2013 being mostly taken up with bedding down our government advertising arrangements and considering new possibilities for CNAV. We were pleased that our small Committee's numbers were briefly boosted with newly-elected members Vanessa Hawkins (Goornong Guide) and Ian Oshlack (Guildford Globe) at the last AGM and shortly after by co-opted member Georgina Wood also from Goornong Guide. Unfortunately personal circumstances resulted in both Georgina's and Vanessa's resignations through the year, and our number once again returned to five.

Much of our focus this year has been on cementing our working relationship with state government advertising agency Mitchell and Partners. This involved addressing any of the glitches in the process introduced last year, of having a central broker to deal with all state government advertising for community newspapers. This is an important role and its implementation has the potential to significantly increase the income of many community newspapers. After our initial call for expressions of interest and subsequent interview of applicants, we were pleased to contract Bill Penrose to be the central booking agent who Mitchell and Partners will work through.

The securing of public sector advertising for community newspapers has been a focus of CNAV since the Association was formed. We believe it is important that notices affecting our communities appear in our publications and it reaps the double benefit of ensuring communities are well-informed as well as providing advertising revenue that further contributes to the viability of our papers.

Another development on the State Government front is the revival of a Regional Communication Forum run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Regional media representatives from all over the state are invited, along with the state government's advertising agency Mitchell and Partners. Communications personnel from various government departments and agencies also attend. John Ellis has been representing CNAV at these events for a number of years and is pleased to see a return of this valuable forum after a lapse of a couple of years.

While we aim to hold at least one regional meeting each year, unfortunately our preoccupation with the government advertising brokerage did not allow us to meet outside Melbourne this year. However, there will definitely be a regional meeting in 2014 and if any region would like to host such a visit the committee would be pleased to hear from them.

The monthly *Roundabout* continues to be our main method of communication between members. John puts much time and effort into ensuring members can keep in touch with each other and with the latest news. With increasing contributions from our members the *Roundabout* is growing into a newsy little publication with much to offer anyone involved in community newspapers. I would encourage everyone to print them out and distribute them (or email them) to all your volunteers.

Finally, I must pay tribute to the members of the 2012/2013 committee for their untiring work in keeping the community newspapers network alive and flourishing. With such a small committee everyone has a job – indeed nearly everyone is an office-bearer! – and they continue to travel monthly from all parts of the state to meet, solve problems and plan for the next step.

Thank you also to all CNAV members for their support of the association and their continuing production of the newspapers and newsletters that help keep communities alive.

Mary Jo Fortuna
President