



President's Report to Outdoor Council of Australia AGM March 2015.

2014 has been a difficult year for the OCA and myself personally. I am indebted to the OCA Management Committee for allowing me leave of absence for a few months during the year. The OCA has continued to function due to the work of the committee. I again draw special attention to the backing of the QORF office and staff as they have continued to provide the secretariat support for the Association in a dedicated and professional manner.

Another year has passed and the OCA has not been able to garner the financial support it needs from any government - Federal or State - to allow it to continue in the manner it has.

- The two Research Projects - OYPRA (Benefits) and UPLOADS (Accidents and Outcomes) - have continued with great support from the broad outdoor sector. It is good to review the regular updates being received from these projects.
- NOLRS has continued to operate under the OCA Banner, but is chiefly undertaken by Western Australian and Queensland registrants.
- AJOE has been discussed and massaged, editors, review teams and publishers considered. One edition was produced during the year but it proves more and more difficult to continue to provide the professional journal the outdoors deserves.

Of major concern to the Management Committee of the OCA has been the continuing lack of financial support from Government. The research projects, NOLRS and AJOE have covered their operating costs, but only through the generosity of the Secretariat. OCA's ability to achieve any traction for the sector has been severely hampered by this lack of funds and therefore lack of human resources to do any strategic development or higher level work. The OCA has reached the point that has been expected over the past few years, where the organisation is precariously close to trading insolvent, it cannot continue in this direction!

Underlying this concern the Committee has been steadily conducting a review of the OCA and its future. The OCA membership was surveyed in November 2013 seeking a response to the recommendation that *"The OCA revise its Constitution to reflect that the Membership should only be open to associations and bodies representing the outdoors at a State or National level."* There was overwhelming support for this and the recommended changes from the formalised OCA run by a Committee, to a less structured network that brought agencies together and supported specific projects.

Thus the Management Committee is making the following recommendation to this AGM.

1. That the OCA committee be tasked with proposing changes to the constitution so that the OCA will become an organisation of associations and bodies representing the outdoors at a State or National level in Australia.
2. That the OCA Committee act on the following recommendations:
 1. There will be a fee for membership in the OCA set to cover the OCA's operational costs (estimated to be of the order of \$4,000 to \$5,000 in 2015) only. So, with 20 organisations the fee could be in the order of half the current \$500.
 2. A Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will be elected to satisfy the needs of Incorporated Associations. Their role will primarily be in arranging for the conduct of twice-yearly meetings of the OCA, ensuring legal requirements of the association are

met, arranging adequate insurance, overseeing a simple website that directs people to the Project Leaders, preparing an agenda and distribution of the minutes of the OCA meetings. These will be honorary roles.

3. Members are expected to attend all OCA meetings that are conducted to receive reports on the OCA's projects, both continuing projects that lie under OCA's name and consider new projects as they are proposed. All members are also expected to make contributions of time and funds to projects they support that come under the auspices of the OCA.
4. Consider a rule that the elected officers, or 25% of the Membership, in consensus may call extra OCA Meetings.
5. The OCA oversees Projects:
 - Projects may be short-term, long-term or on going. E.g. NOLRS would be considered on-going and a specific representation to a government would be short-term.
 - Projects may be operational, strategic or for research (among others).
 - Projects will not receive funding from the OCA.
 - Projects will need to be placed before the OCA at one of the twice-yearly meetings and those organisations willing to sponsor (with funds, office and human resources) the project identified BEFORE any project is supported or rejected by the OCA.
 - IE
 - A Member of the OCA puts a project on the agenda for consideration - with a detailed proposal in writing at least a month in advance of an OCA meeting.
 - If the OCA meeting supports the project "in principle" then:
 - Members attending the meeting will be asked to indicate interest in the project by volunteering for the sub-committee that will conduct/run the project. These members will be expected to provide the required funds to drive the project and all of them will form the sub-committee for that project.
 - Organisations that are not members of the OCA may support and join the sub-committees – provided there is always an OCA presence as detailed below for it to be considered an OCA project.
 - If a viable sub-committee is not formed then the project will lapse - but could be conducted outside the umbrella of the OCA by the proposer (&/or others).
 - If the project does not have the support of the majority of members present (even if a viable group is available) the project will not be considered a project of the OCA.
 - For a project to fall under the banner of the OCA, a member of the OCA would need to auspice and lead the project. The OCA as a whole should agree that the project is worth the focus of the OCA, and a member would need to put their hand up to lead it.
 - An OCA meeting, when receiving reports on projects at its meetings may, by majority of members, choose to continue to support the project by endorsing the sub-committees work or discontinue association with a project - notwithstanding that the project may continue outside the umbrella of the OCA. IE The project won't be controlled by only the OCA, but the OCA will determine at the bi-annual meetings whether it continues to support the project.
 - Membership in the OCA will give an organisation the ability to have a say on which projects the OCA pursues and to receive project feedback. The subcommittee group will contribute financially and report back to the OCA.

The advantages of this proposal are that:

1. OCA will continue as a National Representative Network in the form of an Association.
2. Membership in the OCA will not be expensive as it covers the overarching operating costs only, and allows members to be kept abreast of projects and directions.
3. A single point of contact with the Outdoor Sector is still sustained if Government, the community and/or Industry wish to make contact.
4. Only those of the OCA who are prepared to assist in the funding or providing the secretarial support needed for a project will be on the respective sub-committee. This will ensure those who wish to see the project succeed will drive it. Funding for projects could also come from outside the OCA Membership - but that would be sought and managed by the relevant sub-committee.

5. Costs of the twice-yearly meetings will be minimised through the use of electronic meetings.
6. All OCA Members are invited to OCA Meetings, thus communication is easily maintained with the complete membership.
7. If there are costs associated with a face-2-face OCA meeting it will be shared by all those who attend, ie pool total cost and divide by attendees.
8. If there are costs associated with sub-committees - secretarial, meeting, etc - these are totally borne by the members of the sub-committee in a manner they determine.
9. OCA has oversight by providing a vehicle for the sector to meet, for projects to be "endorsed", run/conducted and for the whole sector to benefit.

The proposed way forward:

1. This AGM passes a resolution to proceed in this direction, as the current Board recommends.
2. The new Board (as required by the current constitution) would form and carry out the wishes of the AGM - presenting a new Constitution for consideration by the membership by July 31 2015.
3. All financial members of OCA would then be invited to a Special Meeting to amend the constitution to carry the OCA into its new format.
4. The first Meeting of the new format OCA would consider all existing projects:
 - a. NOLRS
 - b. AJOE
 - c. UPLOADS
 - d. Benefits Research
 - e. Sector Training Package development and National Outdoor Sector Survey (SSA)and decide to continue them under the banner of OCA or divest them.
5. All Members of the new format OCA are involved in decisions at the National Level from that time forward.

I commend this proposed direction for your consideration.



Ken Pullen
President
7 March, 2015

