

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT - 15 November 2015

First, I must apologise that this AGM is being held so late in the year. At the August SGM we explained to members that the financial statements for the 2014/15 year were not ready as the Auditors had problems locating the necessary financial documents and the minutes which the previous committee did not have or were filed correctly.

My Committee took over the running of the Club at the start of March this year - only for 4 of the 12 months of the financial year.

It was a difficult four months, especially when we found that we had over \$250,000 of unpaid liabilities and very little money in the bank to pay these bills. Fortunately, we employed a very competent and highly motivated Manager, Andrea Tournier, who has experience in accounting and related financial matters. More importantly, she has a friendly and approachable personality which she used so well to solve many of the problems we had with our many creditors.

Together with Henry, Andrea totally re-structured our workforce, saving the Club thousands of dollars. Andrea discovered that some staff did not take any Annual or Long Service Leave for years, thereby accumulating over 550 hours of leave, which the Club would have had to pay out as a lump sum (in the vicinity of \$15,000 each) if the employee decided to resign. The Award allows staff to only accrue approximately 250 hours of leave, depending on their employment conditions. With Andrea's advice, we also put into place a leave policy and gave staff our Leave Guidelines so that our expectations of staff in this area were transparent.

Our staff were also given their Job Descriptions and Employment Contracts. To our knowledge this has never been done in the past. Staff now are clear about what we expect from them and what they can expect from the Committee as their employer. I am proud to say that we now have a professionally run workplace.

We were informed by our Industrial Relations Advisers that these implementations to work related practices at the White Eagle House should have been done as soon as people come onto the PCA payroll.

We have already pointed out the many discrepancies and shortcomings in the way the previous committee managed the finances of this Club, so I won't dwell on it. However, we did discover in August of this year that since March of 2014, the previous Committee did not send invoices to the organisation which leases the back hall (Bingo Hall). This meant the Club was losing out on an income of around \$35,000. Jacek Karpinski and I met with the organisation on a number of occasions to try to work out a repayment process.

There were other discrepancies we found since the 2014/15 Audit was complete. This will be reported on in the Treasurer's report.

I turn now to some of the positive achievements which have taken place since we took over. As you are aware, we have revived our Polish Dance Ensemble, Krakowiak and we have already performed on a number of occasions; our Kitchen Brigade has raised over \$7,000 by running dinners, lunches and selling their Club-made Polish *pierogi* and *gotqski*. We held a very successful Rock 'n Roll Dance at which the Juke Box Rockers gave a stunning performance of rock 'n roll dancing. The National Darts Championships were again held at the Club. The two-day event was not only a success for the Geelong Darts Association but a great success financially for our Club. We look forward to next year being an even greater success.

I must add, however, that we nearly lost having this event at our Club because the previous Committee, for two years in a row, did not pay the sponsorship they promised. When we took over and met with the Geelong Darts Association, we made a commitment to pay the arrears and to continue paying the current year's sponsorship as per the original contract between both parties.

There is still a lot to be done to get the Club out of the mess we found it in. There is maintenance work that has to be done to the building, unfortunately this was neglected for years. We replaced the floor and lino in the front bar area because a water leak under the sink was undetected for a number years, ruining the particle board under the old lino. Heaters/Air Conditioners need major maintenance; many ceiling panels need replacing; and refrigerators and ovens in the Bistro kitchen need to be replaced or have a major maintenance overhaul. All this requires funds, which at present are scarce. Until we pay off the debts we were left with, there is very little we can do in areas of major expenditure.

I will now take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers who worked so tirelessly in the kitchen, cooking food for our functions and raising funds for our Club. Thanks also to the people who voluntarily did some of urgent maintenance work at the Club. Thanks to the people who supported the Club by participating in the running of the various events we organised during the year, especially the very successful two-day Seniors Festival. Thanks to the Bar staff and the maintenance staff who worked co-operatively with our Manager. And a big thank-you to Andrea for her dedication and hard work during the last 9 months and, most of all for her patience when we forget she's at a meeting and we all break into speaking in Polish. We really don't know what we would have done without her advice and her true commitment to our Club.

Finally, thank you to all the members who had faith in us and who continue to support us in these very difficult times. I can assure you all, we will work hard to repay your trust in us.

Grazyna Brzostowski

President

Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc