Chairman’s Report

October 2014

The Board of Directors met at the Windsor office over the last two days of October for sub-committee meetings, a Board meeting, as well as a management meeting. This would be a significantly historical occasion as they would be the last official society meetings to be conducted at George Street Windsor.

THE OFFICE

The company Directors for the AHSA, had announced several weeks ago that the asking price for the Windsor property had been met and that contracts had been exchanged for the sale of the property. The Society's old Heritage building at Windsor had served her purpose well over the past two decades but was however now at that point where a large infusion of funds was necessary to combat several illuminated age associated problems with the building clearly revealing signs that further expense would be necessary as it continued to succumb to age related stress and degeneration. Records reveal that around a decade ago the governing board at the time had spent approximately $75,000.00 in restoration costs, predominately attempting to combat severe damp rising issues that were decaying the structural integrity of the building. This restoration did prove a successful strategy for some years, however ultimately time would reveal this was not an absolute solution. Without the necessary funds to sustain ongoing restoration of this heritage building the decision was made by the Board that if an asking price above valuation was secured, then sale and relocation would be a very prudent move.

The search by the management team for a suitable new premises was somewhat arduous with a criteria of requirements firmly etched. An ideally suited and situated premises was found some months preceding the sale of Windsor. Coordinating the sale and purchase to coincide was stressful as we needed the assurance of the sale before we could negotiate any purchase. It all needed to fall into place so that the move could be as timely and seamless as possible. The move itself was another challenge that took a lot of work with a considerable amount of planning and forethought that had to be backed up by precise organisation, management and team cooperation. I must mention that the AHSA staff were just amazing before, during and after the move, all enthusiastically putting in a huge effort to assure that things ran smoothly with hundreds of boxes needing packing and labelling. A huge amount of gratitude goes out to them for all of their hard work.

The new building in Richmond is well placed within a modern industrial complex. The new office space offers many glowing benefits as well as being feasibly sustainable premises for the long term. This easily maintained modern complex fulfils the predominate requirements and benefits for the progressive longevity and sustainable sound future of the Society that was the catalyst behind rehoming the AHSA. The post office box, banking and phone number remain the same, and all attempts will be made to minimise disruptions during the settling in period. Co-ordinating the move so as to run smoothly has had it’s logistical challenges and Leonie Williamson has put in a huge amount of time and work for the several weeks leading up to the move and again after the move to help insure that all bases were covered. Narelle Kinnear also needs a special thank you for put in so many long hours organising packing and safely securing the huge amount of JEC documents, paperwork and files that needed relocating. The entire office move was a mammoth task, but as with any such moves it gives an opportunity to thin out un-necessary items that one tends to gather over the years and sort out better systems of storage and filling especially given the staggering amount of records and stored stock that the society has. An official opening is scheduled in conjunction with the AGM - members and guests are cordially invited to attend. Times and other details can found below included in the AGM notification.
The well-over valuation sale price received for the Windsor premises coupled with the modest purchase price of the new premises leaves a healthy amount of equity left over to purchase a secondary investment property for the Society. This will yield a much needed regular secondary income for the Society that will help to aid in providing improved services for members. The search for a secondary property can commence now that we know what funds we have to work with. Please know that we will keep the Membership informed as things progress in this regard.

NOTIFICATION OF THE AGM
Due to the much earlier date for the running of the up and coming Australian National Arabian Championships, the Society’s auditors advised that it will be impossible for them to have the audit finalised in time to meet the constitutional time requirements for notifying members and supplying the necessary financial report that has in the past allowed for the AGM to be held during the Championships. In light of this, the AGM will be held at the end of March as usual. There will be an official opening of the new society office at Unit 12, 40 Bowman Street Richmond on 29th March with a start time of 9:30 till 11:30 with the official opening scheduled at 10:30. There will be many giveaways as well as light refreshments. All members and guests are welcome. The office opening will be followed by the AGM being held at The Richmond Club 6 East Market Street Richmond starting at 1pm. Afternoon tea will be provided, however anyone wishing to stay after the meeting for dinner please RSVP so that tables can be reserved for you in the Bistro.

THE WORLD ARABIAN HORSE ORGANISATION CONFERENCE
The World Arabian Horse Organisation is the governing body for all recognised Arabian horse registries world wide. Being a member of the Organisation aids in assuring that horses exported from Australia are accepted into other recognised registries around the world, and gives assurance of the registration capabilities to members who are importing horses from recognised international WAHO approved registries. The WAHO conference is held every second year by a host country. The conference is attended by delegates representing each countries registry from around 40 countries. This years conference was held in Doha, Qatar. The great responsibility of president of WAHO was bestowed on Australia’s own Mr Peter Pond. This is a great honour for Mr Pond, a past Chairman and long serving Director for the AHSA. He is without question ideally suited to this important position and the AHSA Directors wish him well in his capacity as president of WAHO. The conference has 3 days of in depth WAHO meetings preceded by 3 days of Registrars’ meetings. The meetings cover various items including but not limited to; registry issues, welfare concerns, genetic research findings, WAHO rulings, Global Arabian horse production statistics, Member country reports, guest speakers etc. As one of the top five Arabian horse registries in the world, it has always been vital that the AHSA has representing delegates attending these conferences. The Registrar for the AHSA, Ms Helen Dohan and myself attended this year’s conference as the delegates representing our Australian registry. I personally funded my own attendance, while Helen’s was graciously funded in part by Qatar Racing Equestrian Club as well as the AHSA. The primary reason for my attendance was the overwhelming concerns shown by AHSA members at our last AGM in regard to the testing of genetically inheritable disorders, and the memberships desired disclosure of such disorders in the breeding population. This agenda topic proved to be a contentious issue over the course of the WAHO meetings with some Counties delegates opposing disclosure altogether. A great deal of negotiation went on between and after each days meetings debating the issues for and against, with ultimately the WAHO executive committee delivering a suitable solution by way of a wording change of their rulings surrounding test disclosure. The motion of change was then proposed by Australia and seconded by the UK (who were initially steadfast against any form of disclosure). The motion was carried by an overwhelmingly large minority of the room. Each countries current and 2015 recipient’s of the WAHO award were announced with a brief outline being orated for each recipients achievements and contribution to the Arabian breed.
This prestigious award is presented each year to a living purebred horse who has continuously excelled in representing the breed in an outstanding manner and who is a good ambassador for the breed. Some of the more recent Australian recipients who have been decorated with this world recognised honour have been:

2013 Sunlander Australian Ambassador - purebred stallion
2014 Kathmar Park Maverick - purebred gelding
2015 Klass - purebred stallion

REGISTRY
At this point there have been no major changes in registry procedures or requirements by the Society. The production numbers of foals being registered have pleasingly stabilised by an acceptable percentage and even more encouraging is the high numbers of imports and exports that has vastly be increasing over the past two years. The society’s membership numbers have increased considerable as was predicted. The Society office has been running smoothly with turn around times for registrations and other various transactions remaining constantly efficient. The staff moral is extremely high, enthusiastic and all are working cohesively with the board.

BOARD NOMINATION AND VOTING
Voting is required for one Director's position from each of the states of Victoria and Tasmania. I remind all members to get your votes in for who you feel would best serve as a Director for aiding in the running of the AHSA Company. Voting can be conducted either by secure postal vote, or by online voting. Anyone who has not received the relevant voting papers, or is unclear on how to lodge a vote electronically can contact the secretary at AHSA office during business hours.

The various board sub-committee annual reports can be found on the AHSA website. The next Board meeting will be held at the new Richmond office on 7th and 8th of February. Membership renewals are due in January so make sure you are a part of the bright new future for the society.

The festive season is well and truly upon us and I would like to take this opportunity to extend the very best wishes and the warmest of Season's Greetings to all our members and to the many friends of the Arabian horse. From all the Staff and Directors of the AHSA have a very Merry Christmas & Prosperous New Year.

Allan Preston - Chairman 2014