

# 2016 Tasmanian Branch AFSA Annual General Meeting

JJ's Café & Bakery, Longford 10.30am Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Note - although held in February 2017, this AGM was in fact the 2016 meeting. Several attempts were made to hold this meeting at a more appropriate time but due to a variety of unforeseen circumstances it was deferred until this date. The 2017 AGM has now been scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017

**Present** Bill and Kathryn Early, Geoff Quinn, Scott Evans, Troy Harper, Don Beams, Paul & Aaron McDougal, Tim & Shana Murfett, Rodney Fowler

(It was decided that G.Quinn would fulfil the role of Minute Secretary for the duration of the meeting.)

**Apologies** President Bill Earley declared the meeting open and called for any apologies. Apologies were recorded from – Darren Quinn  
It was noted that there were no representatives from the national body of AFSA as the South Australian AGM was also being held on this date.

**Sponsors** Although there were no sponsors present, President Bill paid tribute to those companies and individuals who that had once again supported the Tasmanian Branch of AFSA.

**Minutes** The minutes of the previous AGM having previously been circulated were confirmed on the motion of ...

**Moved** ...Geoff Quinn... **Seconded**... Kathryn Earley..... **Motion** ... Carried.

## Business Arising from the Minutes

1. Ongoing requirement for operators to comply with all relevant legislation. Bill suggested that rather than waste time fighting the system it may be better to simply 'suck it up' and get on with it.
2. Difficulties associated with accreditation of employees/drivers etc. There was a necessity to continually upgrade driver's skills in compliance with accreditation guidelines and it was suggested that the sooner the relevant modules became available 'on-line, the easier it would be to reach and maintain acceptable levels of compliance. Bill indicated that he felt that the recently appointed AFSA Executive Officer, Krysteen McElroy, was showing early signs of being proactive in the areas of training and information dissemination and he held high hopes for some considerable improvement in these areas. He went on to say that Krysteen's background (on the land) should make her perhaps better able to understand issues facing members.
3. It was stated that there were still issues regarding the system for booking fertiliser and although there had been improvements in some areas, it remained an issue requiring the attention of those responsible for its effective and efficient operation. It was suggested that Impact may be suffering some buyer/operator resistance as spreading contractors were incurring extra costs as well as organisational problems as a result of these issues. Scott Evans responded that Impact were aware of the issues and were endeavouring to improve matters. It was suggested that many of the issues were as a result of inadequate training in the initial stages of system implementation and a failure to recognise that Tasmania had a somewhat different requirement to mainland operations.

**Presidents Report** Bill presented a comprehensive report on AFSA (Tas) activities (Copy attached)

He also went on to comment on the need for change in branch hierarchy as it was frequently less than productive for the same two or three members to remain in the drivers seat for too long. Bill stated that while he was prepared to run for one more term at this stage, he would like to see someone else step up and accept some of the responsibility associated. He also suggested that it may be worth while 'head-hunting' suitably qualified and hopefully interested people from outside the organisation and indicated that he would be approaching several possible individuals.

**Moved** .... Troy Harper.... **Seconded**... K.Earley.. that Presidents report be received.

## **Financial Report**

The audited Financial Report was presented by the Treasurer Kathryn Early (copy attached). The report indicated the sound financial position that the branch enjoyed with total funds being \$17,290.32 represented by a Cheque A/C of \$1793.04, At Call A/C of \$1115.99 and a Fixed Term Deposit of \$13831.29. President Bill indicated that most of the money was as a result of the previous profitable Tasmanian conference (2012), and he went on to state that with careful management, the branch should remain in a sound financial situation at least until the next time it was required to host this event.

**Resolved** - That cheque signatories remain the same.

**Resolved** - that any member required to attend a National event (meeting etc.) as a Tasmanian representative should have expenses covered by the Tasmanian Branch. Bill indicated that with the advent of the national Board, there was now less reason to attend actual meetings etc. as most business was now conducted via phone/video conference facilities.

**Moved** ... K.Earley... **Seconded** ... G.Quinn ..that Financial Report be received.

**Motion** .... Carried.

## **National President**

The National President's report was circulated for perusal.

**Moved** ... B.Earley... **Seconded** .. A. McDougal.. that Nat. Pres. Report be accepted

**Motion** ..... Carried

## **Discussion**

Lengthy discussion on Tasmanian reports ensued, topics covered being -

1. Regulations regarding over-width vehicles. As a result it was resolved that B.Earley write to the relevant government department suggesting in the strongest of terms, the need for a 'commonsense' approach to these matters. Present requirements were impractical and contrary to popular opinion, there were no 'national standards' applicable to these issues. It was also suggested that B.Earley write to spreader/bin manufacturers requesting them to give consideration to the actual construction of areas of their equipment where signage (e.g. Wide Vehicle etc.) was required to be situated. (At present there were insufficient un-cluttered areas to accommodate the large signs required to be legally acceptable.
2. It was strongly suggested that Tasmania should endeavour to have a member on the National Board as under present conditions, there was little or no downward transfer of information between the board and the Tasmanian membership. B.Earley suggested that he thought K. McElroy would be very good at disseminating information and that there should in the future be better contact via the AFSA web site and electronic transfers of data etc. and hence better 'value for money' on membership fees. (Note - 2017 Membership Fees to remain as previously set by the National Board)

3. B.Earley indicated that he would follow up on non-financial members and would also be making approaches to other agri-business operators in an attempt to persuade them of the benefits of AFSA membership.
4. Members urged fertiliser manufacturers (in particular) and distributors to insist that clients become accredited under AFSA guidelines as this was one way of producing a more 'level playing field' for industry operators. It was felt that at present, AFSA/Fertcare accreditation was not properly recognised and hence AFSA members were at a distinct risk of being disadvantaged by non accredited operators.

### Adoption

**Moved** ... Troy Harper .. **Seconded** ...K.Earley .. that all reports be adopted  
**Motion** .... Carried.

### Election of Office Bearers

Geoff Quinn (Life Member) to the chair for the election of officers

**President** – there being no further nominations Bill Earley was duly re-elected .

**V. President** – there being no further nominations Darren Quinn was re-elected (Bill indicated that he had several individuals in mind who may be willing to come on boards as members. If he were successful, it was resolved that he have the capacity to appoint suitably qualified (and accepting) individuals to whatever position deemed appropriate at the time.

**Secretary /Treasurer** - Kathryn Earley indicated that she was prepared to continue in these roles and would second any required assistance on an 'as needed' basis..

**Bankers** – Westpac to remain as branch bankers.

**Auditors** – J Hendricks was reappointed as branch auditor.

### AFSA (Tasmania)

**Membership** - Existing members were encouraged to chase up anyone who would benefit from becoming a member of the association - in particular, those who had previously been members but had 'fallen through the cracks'. Don Beams offered his strong support to the association and spoke of the benefits, both business and personal, of being a member. He stressed that although members may well be market competitors; there were enormous benefits to be gained simply by being able to relate to people in similar circumstances and occupations. Basic membership remains at \$500.00/member and it was suggested that given the likely further introduction of technology into farming - GPS, back-tracking, crop monitoring etc.- AFSA membership, training and accreditation would be of great value to **all** operators.

### General Business.

Trailer - A & P McDougal raised the subject of recent damage to the trailer. Bill indicated that repairs had been performed by K.Beams and that the trailer was once again in serviceable condition and presently located at K.Beam's operation. It was suggested that maybe it may be appropriate to sell the trailer to K.Beams but general opinion favoured control of its operation remaining in AFSA hands.

Bill spoke glowingly regarding Kevin Beams previous support for the Tasmanian Branch AFSA and his ongoing involvement with the branch and members via his Spreader Accreditation service. Bill suggested that Kevin Beams merited some form of reward for his support and it was thus -

**Moved ... G.Quinn... Seconded ... P.McDougall...** that Kevin Beams be made an Honorary Member of the Tasmanian branch of AFSA.

**Motion ... Carried**

(As this is a new class of membership, it will need to be decided what if any fee is payable and what if any rights such a member should be granted (e.g. voting etc.)

Paul and Aaron Mc Dougall were happy with the way things were going and reiterated the need for individuals to continually promote both their own business and the advantages of the various systems introduced by AFSA aimed at improving operator accountability and client satisfaction,

Troy Harper reminded of the need for both new and refresher accreditation courses for employees. Once again the need for on-line courses was raised and it was suggested that the new Executive Officer will be pro active in this area.

Tim Murfett raised the topic of issues with 'on farm' dumping of fertilisers - who is responsible for sites / tarps etc. and suggested that **all** transport operators should be required to undertake the Transport Segment of AFSA Accreditation. He further suggested that fertiliser manufacturers should be demanding this qualification from carriers. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding transport operations covering subjects such as cost, efficiency, timing, weight limits, permits etc.

Scott Evans expressed his appreciation to the association and said that it provided an ideal forum for the exchange of ideas and information. He also suggested that there were possibly a number of good people 'out there' (the name Ian Morrison from TP Jones was mentioned on several occasions during the day) whose inclusion would be of great benefit to AFSA. Scott said that he had taken on board several complaints and suggestions that had been raised by members and would in due course raise them with the appropriate company personnel. He also spoke on the vagaries of weather and climatic conditions and asked that operators be aware of all difficulties encountered in the efficient and timely delivery of fertiliser. Scott advised of his decision to 'back away' from involvement on the National Board citing personal issues as the reason.

Don Beams spoke regarding the massive and ever increasing costs of vehicle registration and licensing and suggested that AFSA press for a government review of these subjects. It was suggested that the Executive Officer would be the ideal person to undertake this task as the problems were of a national nature - not simply restricted to Tasmanian transport operators. Don also spoke on the high level of competition from alternative products (granulated, organic etc.) and suggested that it was becoming increasingly difficult to operate at a satisfactory profit. He also mentioned the need to actively become involved with all areas of OH&S as only by actually going down that track could any business hope to have any form of protection against litigation as a result of personal injury etc. At the same time it also had the effect of limiting insurance premiums - absolutely necessary these days. The Beams family having been in the lime business for some 80 years, it was felt that Don's opinion was most certainly to be valued.

Rodney Fowler spoke of the pleasure he had derived from attending his first AFSA meeting, indicating that things were running pretty smoothly in his area and that problems that appeared to be causing issues elsewhere had yet to arise on the North West coast.

Bill asked Troy Harper how he was getting on following the disastrous fire which destroyed all his vehicles and machinery. Whilst declining to name individuals or companies, Troy responded by saying that he had been completely humbled by the overwhelming generosity of not only AFSA members, but the broader community in general, and as a result had gear back on the road. He did make particular mention of the forbearance shown by Rodney Fowler in delaying delivery of a spreader in order that Troy could get one a bit sooner. Troy made the strong plea to all members to make sure that they have adequate insurance cover on all machinery, equipment and buildings.

After an absence from meetings for several years, G Quinn spoke of his delight in the fact that the Tasmanian branch appeared to be operating effectively and remained a stronghold for smaller operators - in particular spreading operators. He indicated that he felt there still appeared to be issues with fertiliser manufacturers and suppliers in that they were faced with a conflict of interest when dealing with non AFSA members - in other words, the bottom line was that they wanted to sell product, and it did not really matter to them whether they sold it to either AFSA members, or anyone else for that matter. For this reason, AFSA simply did not get the support that it perhaps deserved.

Geoff also mentioned that while an attempt to attract new members was indeed laudable, he felt that in order to attract genuinely interested individuals and companies, one meeting a year would not be sufficient to maintain their ongoing interest and that they had every right to expect something in return for their membership fees.

There being no further business, Bill thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

**Meeting Closed**

2.00pm