

President's Report for 2009-2010

It is my great pleasure to present to the meeting tonight the Annual Report for the Australian Womensport and Recreation Association Inc (AWRA).

The last year has been another very successful and worthwhile year for AWRA, with two highlights: the successful completion of *The Catalyst Project*, our national media project, and the translation of our Mentoring module into Mandarin. For most of the reporting year it has been "steady as you go" delivering on our Operations Plan and responding to events and submissions as required.

Reporting against our Strategic Plan/ Operational Plan, we have achieved some of the strategies for KRA 1:

Research, Innovation and Issue management:

The production of quality, innovative research and reports that are evidence based and related to current needs and issues.

We have monitored government sport policy development and contributed as a stakeholder to Australian Sport Commission (ASC) forums and to the Crawford Report. While doing this AWRA has lobbied for a national sport policy. Mid-year we produced a 10 point Election Policy that was distributed to political parties, the ASC and the media.

AWRA conducted *The Catalyst Project* this year, successfully developing a national media training project, to deliver media training workshops and networking opportunities around Australia and to improve our media resources on our website. The project delivered a total of 17 individual workshops and media networking/panel discussions to over 500 participants in city and regional Queensland, NSW, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania and WA. AWRA signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the project, working with Womensport Queensland, Womensport and Recreation NSW, ACTsport, Vicsport, SASport, Womensport and Recreation Tasmania and both Womensport West and the WA Sports Federation.

Judy Goldman (Mediaways Pty Ltd) was the successful Expression of Interest tenderer and did a very professional job of working with the Steering Committee to develop the workshop format, the materials, the media fact sheets (available on our website). Her company also delivered some of the workshops, while some states choose to use local media presenters. Julie Sarll was hired to produce the independent Evaluation Report for the Office for Women, which showed that client satisfaction with all the workshop content was very high. The combined "excellent" and "very good" responses for the four areas of content were:

- ✓ 94% for the content overall
- ✓ 86% for relevance
- ✓ 85% sufficient time, and
- ✓ 77% networking and sharing ideas

Some of the feedback indicated the need to cover more new social media in the future, as well as continuing with traditional media training.

A legacy of this project has been the development of a Media Directory which lists a number of contact people for the media to use when they require a statement or comment on issues in women's sport.

Delivering AWRA's projects through state bodies has been beneficial to both parties and has financially assisted some of the state womensport associations. There has been a trend in recent years for state governments to reduce or only maintain funding to the state peak bodies and as a result they are struggling to sustain themselves. Womensport Queensland has suffered a large annual budget cut-back and it looks as if Womensport West will be wound up.

AWRA was successful with a special funding application to the Australian Sports Commission to translate our Mentoring Module into Mandarin, a first for Australian sport. AWRA managed this project, working with Chin Translations Services, Melbourne, and it is pleasing to see that this module is available through both AWRA's and the ASC's websites.

The Board responded to the media discussion on the Caster Semanya saga and a position statement is on our website. It seems that the issue of transsexuals competing in athletic events will be around for awhile.

KRA 2 Communication:

A high profile brand through the recognition of AWRA as a valuable source of information and the voice for women and girls in sport, physical activity and recreation.

As a volunteer organization we are limited in our human resources but the longer we are around, the more known AWRA becomes and the more recognition we achieve. Membership has grown again:

Individual Members – 354 (up from 270)

Organisation Members – 8 (up from 6)

Media Contacts – 91 (up from 33 – which is a mailing list which we use)

AWRA's website functions efficiently, with frequent updating. Emails are sent to our database to alert members when significant additions are made to the website. Iain Toohey (Sydney) is our AWRA's webmaster and continues to do a very commendable job.

Calls for help and information are regularly coming to AWRA through our website response form: ranging from student inquiries, information on grants, the media, jobs, research, etc. Our web modules on leadership continue as a free download.

Our enews *The AWRA Advocate* continues with a 6-8 weekly turn around time. I have continued as the Editor with assistant Anne Jackson (Sydney). Anne does a great job of proof reading and sub-editing, which is a very valuable contribution.

The distribution list has increased from 317 to 439 from February to September 2010 and there has been an average readership of 88.6 opens per send, with the size of the send averaging 369.4 addresses. This is an average open rate of 24%, which is the same percentage as in 2009.

In August, we launched the AWRA forums through the site. These were designed to be a central discussion place for issues regarding women in sport. However, there has been no activity on this area of the site, despite an email being sent to the entire database and being added to the homepage menu. There have however been a few people register on these forums, but they have not been active. We need to come up with a new strategy to promote the forums or remove them.

Throughout the year AWRA website hits ranged from a high of 7,522 in May to a low of 4,243 in February. So far in 2010 there has been an average of 6,070.5 visitors per month to the site.

A new membership brochure was printed in September, courtesy of Paragon Printers (Canberra) who sponsored the whole production and delivery to our office. Many thanks to Mel Dalglish and his company for this wonderful support! The brochure certainly helps with our membership numbers and promotion.

AWRA produced several media releases over the year but the media's follow-up has been slow and we need to assess our approach on this. The best response was reaction to AWRA's 10 point Election Policy for the Federal election: we heard back from *Inside Sport* magazine, the Greens and the Shadow Minister for Sport.

Communication with the now former Minister for Sport and Youth, Kate Ellis MP, was on a more informal basis, talking with her at two or three sports functions over the year, including sitting with her at an Adelaide fund raiser on the eve of the national election. I did spend some time at the Delhi Commonwealth Games with the new Minister for Sport, Senator Mark Arbid (from NSW) and have followed up his request for a meeting.

I attended a morning tea in Melbourne with our Patron, Governor General Quentin Bryce AO and consequently sent her a list of forthcoming national women's sport events she could attend. It is pleasing to report that this has been acted on by her office.

AWRA joined the national alliance secretariat, Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), based in Canberra with the YWCA, and Heather Reid is our delegate. There are over 50 women's organisations in ERA and the amount of communication that goes back and forth by email is amazing. Funded by the Federal Government, this is one of five national alliances that supplies policy advice, giving AWRA the opportunity to examine draft documents and provide input.

AWRA nominated for the Kookaburra Award conducted by *Our Community*, however we were unsuccessful; likewise with the Media Award for Women's Sport (our website) conducted by the ASC. However, entering these awards raised the profile of the organisation.

Likewise our presence at sports conferences is also important for raising profile. This year I attended the ASC's Our Sporting Future Conference 2010 (Gold Coast) and International Sports Business Conference (Melbourne). AWRA, through Dr Imke Fischer and I, presented a paper and a poster at the International Women's Group World Conference last May in Sydney. Heather Reid, Jennifer Riattia and Imke attended the conference and Patrizia Torelli from Spheres of Influence International was the successful applicant to attend the conference, through a free registration given to AWRA.

Increasingly AWRA is being asked to endorse various events. We agreed to be a supporter of *Sports Hydrant's* Sport for Women Day (Canberra) in March this year and to support a Females in Football Conference March 2011 and the Australian Women's Health Magazine's I Support Women In Sport Campaign 2011.

KRA 3: Business development:

A governance framework with business operations fully supporting the objects of AWRA.

With contractor Julie Sarll as the facilitator, AWRA conducted a strategic planning day in Melbourne last December. Secretary Jennifer Riatti has followed up on this as to progress with delivery with Board Members. A Risk Management Plan is now a priority for AWRA.

Strategic partnerships have been maintained by delivering our projects through state organisations, as with *The Catalyst Project*, and with the Mentoring module translation, working with the Australian Sports Commission. AWRA was invited and attended stakeholder workshops in Canberra, Melbourne and the Gold Coast, contributing to ASC planning on participation and women's sport. The Gold Coast workshop on women's sport was a follow-up to the ASC' research report *Towards a Level Playing Field: sport and gender in Australian media*. However, nothing has been heard since from the ASC in regard to the workshop recommendations and the new directions sports policy that came out before the Federal Election.

It is very pleasing to again note that our financials are in order and that we have made some savings from grant money and from earned interest on the Office for Women (OfW) grant before it was dispersed.

AWRA acquitted its OfW grant for the leadership project on time, 30 September 2009, with an extension from 30 June, due to the delayed WA media workshops. A big thank you to our very efficient Treasurer Nicolle Rantanen (Adelaide) and Auditor Sue Page. (Adelaide) for their work on this and for the ongoing attention to our financial matters. Nicolle was entered in the Westpac Treasurer's Award as recognition of her excellent contribution to AWRA.

AWRA was unsuccessful with a Volunteer Small Equipment Grant of \$2,500 (from the Federal Government) to cover petrol costs and a laptop computer for our volunteers.

AWRA was also unsuccessful in obtaining a women's sport leadership grant from the Australian Sports Commission, which is very disappointing.

AWRA has since applied for two state government grants and has been notified of lack of success with the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation and we have yet to hear from the Victorian Department of Community Development. In both applications AWRA joined with the YMCA to deliver sports leadership training for women in regional areas. Many thanks to Nicole Dunn who did a lot of the work with me on these applications. It is clear that AWRA needs to develop other sources of funding, apart from government grants.

AWRA maintains international contacts, particularly with the International Association for Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW) as I am one of two Vice Presidents and Dr Imke Fischer is the Australian country representative. The Memorandum of Understanding with the International Women's Group (IWG) for Women's Sport continues.

AWRA continues to make its presence known around Australia. All projects have been successfully completed this year, our organisational infrastructure and website are very functional and we readily respond to calls for assistance, whether for speakers at conferences, advice or information. Through the hiring of various contractors to implement our projects and the donated time and hard work of the Board (volunteers) we should feel very proud of what we have achieved together.

Many thanks to Heather Reid (Deputy Chair, Canberra), Jennifer Riatti (Secretary, Perth), Nicolle Rantanen (Treasurer, Adelaide) and Board members Dr Imke Fischer (Sydney), Sue Scudds (Perth) Professor Kristine Toohey (Gold Coast) and Nicole Dunn (Echuca) . Board meetings have been conducted by quarterly teleconferences and emails goes back most frequently.

I would like to sincerely thank each Board member for their valuable and worthwhile contributions to AWRA and for their personal support.



Our members are very grateful for what you do and I look forward to another successful and challenging year ahead.

Janice Crosswhite OAM
President
3 November 2010