

ROCA President's Report, 2019

Welcome.

It has been an interesting past 12 months serving as the ROCA President. ROCA was established in 1898 and has provided an ongoing link for the thousands of men and women who have studied at or have been associated with Roseworthy since it was established in 1883 as the first agricultural college in Australia. Representing an organization that has been running for 121 years is not something to be taken lightly. But I must confess, trying to get your head around 121 years of history and protocols in an organization is not an easy task

I would like to thank the retiring ROCA Committee members for their service, namely David Coyner, Alan Richardson and Melissa Rebbeck. I would like to also thank the ROCA Committee Members eligible for re-election: Dale Manson, Richard (Dick) Turnbull, Mark Rodda, Kate Forrest, Andrew Dennis and Jess van der Weyer.

Those that know me, know that I am not afraid to challenge convention. Just because something's always been done a certain way, doesn't mean other ways shouldn't be considered. This generally means our Committee meetings involve some good robust discussion.

PASSING OF ROCA MEMBERS

I would like to respectfully acknowledge the passing of ROCA members over the past 12 months. Thankyou to Dale Manson for recording the loss of these members:

John Edward Both (RDA 1972)

Frank Douglas deLisle Brock (RDA 1956)

John Graham Donaldson (RDA 1946)

James Bower Forwood (RDA 1957)

Thomas Leslie Wyburn Gepp (RDA 1939)

Richard Thorold Grant (RDA 1950)

Brian Glen Nankivell (RDA 1947)

Robert Greenslade Saint (Attended RAC in late 1950's)

Donald Neil Stanley (RDA 1955)

Harry Vernon Stephen (RDA 1948) (ROCA Centenary Medal 1999)

Gregory Bruce Young (Attended RAC in the mid 1960's)

ROCA Membership

Our ROCA membership stands at around 2,000 and it remains a challenge to grow our member base, if we take a quick look at the facts. We have an ageing membership. The University of Adelaide has plans to form a Veterinary Alumni next year, and I think this is wise given it is quite a specialized occupation. I am not sure at this point that ROCA has the resources be all things to all people and we continue to discuss the issue of capturing young graduates amongst our Committee. The bottom line is that ROCA is run by volunteers, with a limited amount of spare time, so to devote the time to come up with the necessary strategies to incorporate today's Vet Science graduates into ROCA is indeed a

challenge for us. In addition to this, the University is also running 5-year rolling cohort reunions on an annual basis for graduates from numerous fields including agricultural graduates from Roseworthy and Waite Campuses. This year they held their second such ag alumni event, covering graduates from 2003 – 2007. I attended with my cohort last year and these University of Adelaide Reunions are well run and a credit to the University organizing team. So going forward, we as the ROCA Committee welcome input on how we might stay relevant in this dynamic modern environment.

ROCA Finances

ROCA Finances are beginning to stabilize now, considering the past drain on our accounts from the printing of the ROCA Digest. Thanks largely to Mark Rodda for progressing plans for the Digest to move to an electronic format, and introducing a fair charge for those not ofay with computers to continue to receive a printed copy. It has been known for years that the printing of the Digest was the most significant ongoing cost to ROCA, and now we have finally taken the necessary step to halting this drain on our funds. Printing the Digest was literally sending us broke. We remain vigilant to capture any Old Collegians who “missed the memo” and don’t know that a mechanism still exists to access a printed copy should they so desire.

ROCA continues to award two prizes at the Roseworthy Campus annual Student Awards ceremony, namely the ROCA Prize in Animal Science and the ROCA Prize in Veterinary Bioscience. This is funded exclusively through member donations to ROCA, but mainly the sale of ROCA wine. We very much appreciate the cooperation with O’Leary Walker wines to carry out this ROCA fund raising venture. Thankyou also to those Old Collegians who donate funds annually.

Thankyou to Andrew Dennis for applying for an RM Williams financial grant to augment out funds, but with the business’s recent sale, this program has suffered neglect and we were unsuccessful. We will be keeping our eye out for a similar scheme in future.

ROCA continues to harbor a healthy Term Deposit for a rainy day, and it is important to preserve this as a prudent business tactic. I thank the Treasurer for his ongoing attention to ROCA Finances.

I would also like to thank William Buck for their in-kind audit of ROCA’s books.

ROCA and the University of Adelaide Alumni

This year, Andrew Dennis, Kate Forrest and myself set up a stall at the “O” Week (Orientation Week) Club day at Roseworthy Campus, where new students come along to peruse the various Clubs available for students to join. Whilst it was not relevant to sign up new ROCA members, it was interesting to see what students had offered to them.

Mark Rodda is the agricultural representative on the Alumni Council and Mark continues to provide a voice for agricultural graduates and ROCA with the University of Adelaide. Thankyou Mark for your commitment to this in addition to your time on the ROCA Committee.

For the third year running we secured Alumni sponsorship for a social media campaign. Thankyou to Kate Forrest for preparing this grant submission. This campaign will again feature Roseworthy graduates who have excelled in their fields, with the aim to increasing ROCA membership through social media. We thank Wright Social for their clever work in designing and implementing the campaign and the University of Adelaide Sciences Alumni for their financial support to continue to help us play in the social media space.

I would also acknowledge the contribution of our Alumni representative Carolyn McLean for her commitment to assisting ROCA in running our organization with database management, communication on available grants and notification of upcoming functions. Carolyn has also embarked on a big project with Alan Richardson to update the ROCA Website and bring it in line with the University of Adelaide format. Whilst it would be great to build something truly independent with our beloved Pink and Black theme, we simply do not have the resources to maintain a website under our own steam. Many thanks for your assistance Carolyn and your team. I believe it will be soon up and running – feel free to visit for news, events, Award lists and Graduate lists among many other things.

ROCA Award of Merit 2019

Tonight we have broken with convention and have withheld the announcement of the Award of Merit winner until the Reunion Dinner. The winner will be amongst his Roseworthy graduate cohort, a pure coincidence since he would have been nominated by a couple of them anyway. I have made arrangements to have the announcement posted in the Stock Journal, and posted on the ROCA Facebook page following the dinner.

While it is unconventional to withhold the winner until the dinner, Alan Richardson has kindly agreed to run a live interview with the recipient immediately after the presentation as a form of acceptance speech with the winner. Thankyou Alan.

MEMORABILIA

ROCA has embarked on a project with members to collect and display memorabilia in some of the the cabinets in the main hall / cafeteria area. Thankyou to members who have donated items. Thanks also to David Purdie for his cooperation with this project.

FUTURE OF ROCA

Going forward, ROCA will need to be a dynamic group, open to new ideas and ways of doing things that moves with the times. We cannot afford to remain in the past. We need to come up with new ways of capturing the imagination of members and encouraging ongoing links to Roseworthy's history. With a team of

time-poor volunteers, ROCA currently relies on the assistance of the University of Adelaide to help administer the organization and thanks them for this help. As always, we welcome new Committee members to help us stay as independent as possible.