



President's Report - AGM 2017

Welcome to the 2017 annual general meeting of the Lorne Historical Society. I believe that this year will be seen as a watershed year for the Society. Four years of pre-planning and hard work has borne fruit.

In our refurbished room we have curated two exhibitions - Shipwrecks along our Coastline and the Guesthouses of Lorne. Both have been very successful. We have opening every Sunday morning, thereby increasing the numbers of visitors. We have begun a fundraising effort to refurbish the entrance and established a program budget to give a resourcing framework for our future efforts.

We were all greatly saddened by the death of Joan Wheal. Joan was a powerhouse in the creation and development of the Lorne Historical Society. We owe much to Joan and husband Graham for their commitment to the preservation of Lorne's history. Our challenge is now to think of an appropriate memorial to honour her outstanding contributions. It is proper that we celebrate the success of our new direction, but we must never forget that we are in the position to develop exhibitions, to facilitate research and to digitally secure our collection because of the work and foresight of members like Joan Wheal – Vale Joan.

Our membership stands at a very healthy seventy and the number of visitors has increased due to the additional opening days, the monthly morning teas, the mounting of exhibitions and the associated opening nights and importantly visits from other historical societies. my thanks to the members who regularly support these activities.

My thanks to Peter Spring who compiled the submission to the Falls Festival Community Fund for a \$5,000 grant to continue our work digitizing and reproducing several of our valuable resources. With these funds we will be enhancing and republishing several of our books for sale and digitizing the cataloguing process, a vital step to enable easier recovery by members and the public retrieving materials for research purposes.

Financially, we have secured the support of Abraham Cohen (\$1,000) to support our yearly operations, increased our annual fee and increased the number of financial members, received greater income from our exhibitions and extended opening hours and sought appropriate funding sources for specific purposes, namely grants and fundraising. We raised \$8,000 the night of the dinner when the Lorne Community honoured the many contributions made by Jan and Peter Spring, when they were awarded the Doug and Mary Stirling Cup. I want to thank the Allan and Audeen Walls (\$2,000), Paul and Jane Upham (\$1,500), The Lorne Hotel (\$1,000) and Paul and Maxine Spizicca (\$500). The \$8,000 is effectively \$16,000 as the Surf Coast Shire has pledged to match dollar for dollar up to \$50,000 towards the upgrade of the Society's façade and entrance.

I believe that curating and staging our exhibitions has allowed more members to use their strengths in a meaningful way. For example our newest active member, Sandra McComb, was able to use her academic background and personal interests to provide us with a framework for research into Lorne's guesthouses, and Judi Kenneally was able to use her design skills to produce fantastic posters for both exhibitions. Also many members contributed in small, but significant ways. Our challenge is to now agree to the content and display of the permanent exhibition.

We must prepare early next year for a new three-year strategic plan, have a clear direction about our role in the 100 years of various milestones in the development, work and completion of the Great Ocean Road and with whom we wish to partner in these celebrations. I believe it is now possible to stage the work on the façade and we must again consult with Bob Sinclair to establish an agreed direction for this work.

Committee Executive

I wish to thank those members who have taken executive positions on the committee: Secretary - Marilyn Mackenzie, Treasurer - Graham Flyer and Vice-President - Peter Spring, Representatives on the Surf Coast Heritage Committee - David and Pauline Walker and Will Beale.

I also thank all members of the Society who regularly attend committee meetings and who open the room to the public. The move to Sunday morning has been a success. The challenge is now to think about ways to extend the opening hours.

Best wishes for the Christmas period and I look forward to working for the Society in 2018, the beginning of our centenary celebrations for the various stages of the Great Ocean Road.

Gary Allen