

A'van Club of Australia Inc.

President's Annual report

Annual General Meeting - Casino NSW

Tuesday 1st May, 2018

It is with much pleasure that I now present to you the 19th Annual Report of the A'van Club of Australia Inc. and my second one to you since becoming President.

Our last National Gathering was in Denmark WA where we had some 180 or so vans in attendance. We felt this was a good number considering the tyranny of distance, and I think all those who went from the Eastern States now really appreciate the efforts that our WA people make to cross the Nullarbor most years. The Denmark gathering was most successful and we thank the WA contingent for their efforts to assist in many areas, ably led by John Critchley and Colin Brown. Denmark was a fabulous location, with much to offer in the way of sightseeing, wineries, eateries and so on, and many of you embarked on major travels in WA and around Australia after the gathering. This year we have some **237** vans here at Casino (**417 members**) and we have been assisted by **Ross and Carol Wylde Brown** and the NSW Mid North Coast group with many aspects of the gathering, in particular, the purchase of the lucky door prizes and assistance with registration.

Where are we from this year? Predominantly from the Eastern States, with smaller numbers from WA, Tasmania and Far North Queensland. We thank all those in attendance, and especially those who have incurred long travel distances and high costs to get here. The map at the Club House will show you the exact numbers from each state.

The year has continued to be a full one for our very busy Committee and I would like to tell you what they have been up to and thank them for their contribution to the Club – it is worth noting that since the Club started, all positions held have remained voluntary. Everyone on Committee has a job to do, and all have worked enthusiastically in their particular areas.

First of all I would mention that during the year our Vice President, **Vickie Teague**, left the Club following her and husband Greg's decision to change to a larger caravan that better met their needs for future travel plans. I would like to formally thank Vickie for her efforts during her tenure as Vice President, and in particular the work she did regarding planning future national gatherings, including this one. Ably supported by Greg, they visited all proposed sites for our recent nationals, which was a great help in decision making and planning – the Committee had the opportunity to thank Vickie and Greg in person recently when we met in Canberra.

To fill this gap I am pleased to say that **David Wilkinson** stepped up to the challenge of Vice President and has consequently been heavily involved with planning this Casino gathering, as well as looking ahead to future gatherings which I will talk about later on. For the last few years the Vice President role has chaired the sub Committee charged with investigating, proposing and planning future gatherings such as this. David has been assisted this year by **Neil James**, in his first year as a Committee member, and also **Don Parkinson**, who was co-opted to the sub Committee during the year following Vickie's departure.

The Secretarial role remains a big one and I am pleased to say that **Rick Houghton** has continued to take this on with skill and enthusiasm. Thank you Rick. **Martin Hodgson** in his second year on Committee has been doing the Records Officer role as well as assisting Rick in several areas. **Carole Brun** has been

busy processing new memberships as well as administering Facebook ,and chasing up raffle donations. Carole has decided to leave the Committee to concentrate on her Co-ordinator role with Strzelecki Group. Her Committee role will be covered by Rick and Martin for now, and we thank Carole for her contribution to the Committee work over the past **5** years.

During the year **John Bromley** has stepped down from the Treasurer role after some 15 years. We thank John for his dedication to this role over those years and I'm pleased to say that he has decided to remain on the Committee where he will assist the Secretary by doing the minutes of our meetings among other things – he will present his final Treasurer's Report shortly. **Ros Bolton** has taken over the Treasurer role as of the beginning of this financial year, and we thank Ros very much for taking on this important role.

A further sub Committee is that of the website development. This is headed up by **Cliff Hicks**, our Immediate Past President, along with **Martin Hodgson**, and our Web Manager, **Ron Stootman**, whom you will hear from later. Cliff is currently also doing some work in compiling the Club history in conjunction with others, including our founding members **Brendon and Joan Smith**, and Cliff has continued to assist and support me in my role.

One of our long serving Committee members is **Bruce Gibbs** and is now the “go to” man for the supply of A'van badges and banners for the regional groups – a project this year was to standardise all the regional banners to incorporate the National Club logo and to make them of similar size for display purposes – most have now been done and are on display back at the park. Bruce will also be running the Chef's Challenge this year after missing Denmark.

As in previous years, we have been assisted by many people outside of the Committee – **Les Griffiths** who does the website calendar of events, **Tom McKendrick** who organises the Uke players, and **Jan Ross**, who does the daily blog of the national gatherings. Also a big role is that of Newsletter Editor/compiler which has been very well done by **Mike Trinick**. Mike put out a call for assistance in this area with a view to handing the role on, and I'm pleased to announce that **Jan Loveday** from South Australia has offered to take this on, as well as nominating for Committee. Jan could not be with us here in Casino due to house moving commitments.

And of course added to that are the Co-ordinators and hosts from our 13 State, regional, and solo groups. I will introduce our Co-ordinators later, but for now I will mention that the Greater Sydney Group is up and running. You might recall that I announced the formation of this Group last year, and thanks to the enthusiasm of **Ken and Cheryl Parrott** who are at their very first National Gathering, it is now a fully fledged Group with several activities already undertaken and more on the calendar, and of course their own banner and Klop set!! It has been pointed out to me that this is the only Group we have that is based specifically in a capital city.

And among our many helpers are those affectionately known as the “Committee Roadies”, the wives, husbands and partners of our Committee members. The Roadies help us with all sorts of things at Committee meetings and National gatherings, and most of all provide us with support. So to my **wife Lily, Noelene Houghton, June Hicks, Jan Wilkinson, Jan Hodgson, Jane Winkler, Jeni James, Greg Bolton, and Ray Brun** – many thanks for that. I suppose I should mention that it's not all hard work – they all get together for some great outings while we the Committee are having our meetings, which often go for most of the day.

Developments this year have continued to focus on going paperless where we can to improve efficiency and reduce administrative workload for our volunteers. The A'van Membership Directory is now only available on the website and is being kept up to date on a bi monthly basis instead of annually, which whilst saving on printing and postage, is now giving more current information to Co-ordinators and to all members. Also this year for the first time we have used online registration for this gathering, a feature which some **60%** of you used, along with EFT payments, which have been in for a few years now. This has saved members postage and delays, and has saved your Club considerably in postage costs. All this helps to keep our annual subscription costs as low as possible. Our Web Manager, Ron Stootman, will tell

you more about some of these developments shortly. For those that didn't use the online facility this year, it really proved to be very easy and I encourage you to try it next time. We will look at going fully online in the near future, and as recently as last month we have introduced an online membership form for new members.

Also our Facebook page, announced last year, is going strong with some 280 or so members now using it. We acknowledge that Facebook is not for everyone and does not replace normal Club communications, but many have found it very useful for fast feedback on questions about vans and campsites, and also for meeting up with other members. Thank you to Carole and Ros who have been administering the site.

Our membership continues to be steady with resignations and new memberships tending to balance out as in previous years. We currently have 1132 vans with 10-20 new memberships being processed each month and of the 25 or so resignations in the last few months, most were due to changing to a different type of van. We continue to have an active program of activities with some 65 or so trips away in the last A'vanner calendar, plus many lunches and coffee mornings. This after all is core to the Club and why we are all members, so that we can get away on well structured activities with like minded people.

I guess we represent an ageing population to some extent, and it is always sad to report that a number of our members have been ill over the past year or have passed away. We wish all those that are ill a speedy recovery, and pass on condolences to those who have lost loved ones. Among those that were ill last year were **Ian Blencowe**, and it is pleasing to see that **Ian and Jean** are back with us here at Casino this year. Also great to see **Barb Chapple** here after the sad loss of Grahame in the previous year.

I hope that you will enjoy the remaining activities that we have in store for you here at Casino. It has been a privilege to serve as you President this year. I have continued to find the role rewarding, challenging, and most of all enjoyable. I have accepted the nomination to continue, and if elected, look forward to the coming year of activities and our 20th year celebrations in 2019.

I now move that the President's Annual Report be accepted – can I have a seconder please.



Les Lawrenson
President, A'van Club of Australia Inc. .

1st May 2018