



## Vice President's Report for Annual General Meeting 2015

### Introduction

The Firewood Association of Australia continued to perform remarkably well in 2015 with its main objective protecting and promoting the interests of its members.

Unfortunately 2015 has seen the resignation of Steve McNamara as President. Even though the circumstances around Steve leaving were not ideal, I think it needs to be acknowledged that both Alan and Steve handled the situation with the utmost dignity and professionalism. Steve has served the office of president impeccably since the formation of the association in 2005 and without his massive contribution I'm certain the Association would not be as strong and stable as it now is. I'm sure that I speak for the entire committee in thanking Steve for his offer of continued support and his past efforts along with wishing him the very best for the future. I will do my best to continue Steve's work however you may need to get used to a lot less polish.

The Association has been kept very busy this year and has achieved excellent outcomes in SA and NSW where the industry has been under considerable attack from local councils and the EPA. The continued promotion of the correct use of firewood for domestic heating has been a goal this year with some encouraging results, and I would encourage a redoubling of our efforts in this area for 2016. Proactive demonstration of public education in the correct use of firewood, to avoid significant smoke or particulate pollution, just may be what is needed to keep these constant attacks at bay.



## **Record cold weather creates wood shortage**

What a great year for firewood sales!

Best winter for 20 years say a lot of people, best year ever say the rest.

You know firewood is going to be popular when it snows in Queensland.

However, as you all know it is great to be busy BUT running short on wood supply can sometimes be worse than having a quiet year. Lack of supply frustrates customers and they potentially seek alternate sources or worse alternative heating options. What has the ability to become more damaging though is the necessity to continue supply with substandard wood and as noted in the FAA's October newsletter

*"The challenge ahead for the production side of the industry is to build up sufficient stock over summer to be in a position to satisfy the demand for seasoned wood for next winter if we are lucky enough to get another good season in 2016."*

So good luck for the off season and let's hope for a string of good years

## **South Australia EPA working with the FAA**

As previously reported in the association's newsletters, the FAA has had some significant success influencing the SA EPA's attitude towards wood heaters and firewood use. Through the recent efforts of Alan and Dane McGreevy and Todd Gelletly, who apparently must have wowed the crowd, the FAA has (hopefully) managed to turn a fairly negative proposed air quality policy around to nearly a positive.

This is a great example of what we can achieve as FAA members, as we are the ones with the knowledge and experience to potentially educate those who have the ability to make decisions affecting the whole industry's viability.



## **FAA Smoke Reduction Project**

2015 has seen the Association commencing Phase 3 of the Project, the objectives of which are:

- Measure the long term effectiveness of education intervention through repeated observation of targeted households
- Deliver follow up action if required to recalcitrant emitters
- Measure improvements to local area air quality resulting from smoke reduction from individual high emitting households

Those members who have separately funded the Project cannot be thanked enough for their contribution to the whole Association. This fantastic initiative should hold the industry in good stead for many years to come.

A full copy of the FAA Smoke Reduction Project is available from the Association by request. Let's hope the NSW EPA can see reason when the report is finalized next year.

## **Example of intervention working and why the FAA is relevant**

### **Mary vs Marrickville Council**

This poor lady had a horrible run in with Marrickville council when she installed a wood heater but unfortunately didn't have the skills to operate it correctly which resulted in a complaint being made about the smoke from her heater.

Instead of educating her in the proper use of her wood fire, the council demanded she immediately remove her new fireplace or pay a ludicrous fine.

Enter the FAA who quickly diagnosed the problem and educated poor Mary on the finer art of fire lighting and the problem was well on its way towards a resolution. The FAA then set about convincing the council that they should let Mary demonstrate that she could now operate her heater without making smoke, which she did successfully.

I am pleased to be able to report that on the 11th of November, some 18 months after seeking the FAA's help, Mary was finally issued with an unconditional approval for the use of her wood heater.



A fairly common message is arising here; where better education of the public will go a long way to solving many, many of the wood industry's problems.

### **Committee and Secretariat**

The FAA would not only have folded long ago but would never have come into being if it were not for the outstanding efforts of Alan McGreevy and Greg Barnes of Q.A Pty. Ltd. This current financial year (2015/16) marks the end of an era with the retirement of Alan and Greg from their role as contracted administrators and managers of the FAA. While the timber industry experience of Alan and Greg will no doubt be missed, the committee was pleased to receive a proposal from Dane McGreevy (Alan's son) to take on the role of administering the association after 30 June. Alan and Greg have agreed to provide ongoing support for Dane, should he need any, to ensure a seamless transition. The committee will meet in March 2016 to award the association's next administration contract.

I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for their contributions during the year. The Committee was made up of:

President	Stephen McNamara
Vice President	Anthony Wilson
Secretary	Paul Harriss
Treasurer	Doug Schutz
Ordinary Member	Todd Gelletly
Ordinary Member	Joel Belnick

Anthony Wilson

Vice President.