



GPO Box 1108
Sydney, NSW 2001

28 September 2007

Ms Emily Ray
Secretary
Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc
GPO Box 1108
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Ms Ray

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc – Annual Report 2006/2007

I am pleased to submit the following report on the activities of the Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc ('Farm Writers') for 2006/2007.

Committee.

I would like to begin by thanking the out-going committee for their cheerful commitment to the Association and their work over the year – and I particularly thank those who are standing for re-election. And on behalf of the Committee, I'd like to thank Stuart Hutton, who, as Immediate Past President, is an ex officio member of the Committee and has been active and supportive in that role. Stuart has not only provided guidance but has willingly stepped in to cover other roles when necessary.

The following members were elected to the committee at the Annual General Meeting held on 27 October 2006 or have been co-opted since that date.

Colin Munro	Vice President		
Suzie Ward	Vice President	Corporate Member Liaison	
Emily Ray	Secretary		
Richard Hincks	Treasurer		
Jamie Graham	Committee	Front of house	
Margaret McCullough	Committee	Membership Secretary	resigned 01/07
Sally Edgar	Committee	Newsletter	resigned 06/07

Claire Braund	Committee	Newsletter/Member Recruitment	
Sarah Robson	Committee	Venue Liaison	resigned 06/07
Mick Keogh	Committee	Website Liaison	
Tim Powell	Committee	Newsletter	co-opted
Sally Davison	Committee	Membership Secretary	co-opted

The three resignations during the year were accepted with regret as all three members had made a unique and valued contribution, without which our core activity could not continue. Suzie Ward and Claire Braund advise that they will not stand for re-election. We will especially miss Suzie's cheerful energy and willingness to pitch in to help get things done and I am personally grateful for her support this year.

Financial

The Association's Treasurer, Richard Hincks, will present a full financial report to members. Suffice for me to say that I am pleased that the Association maintains a healthy financial position with subscriptions covering our administration costs and the small loss we made running our monthly meetings. This year we again used the interest from our fixed deposits to fund two awards – this time helping two members to attend the IFAJ Congress in Japan.

I would like to record my thanks to Richard for continuing to improve our processes and ensure that we run a 'tight ship'.

Functions

Farm Writers held eleven functions during the year, which were attended by 726 members and guests – an average of 66 per seminar (61 the previous year).

This year's program was wide ranging - with topics as dry as the Murray Darling Basin and the Budget, as contentious as the single desk for wheat export and as worthy as the work of beyondblue and the Aboriginal Employment Services. The skill and standing of the speakers and the topicality of their subject matter are reflected in the support from members and their guests. The highlights of the program were our 40th Anniversary celebration in September with JB Fairfax AM on the future of rural media and, of course, our ever-popular Christmas function. I do not propose to single out any of our guest speakers as I think they all gave well prepared and interesting talks and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all again.

A full schedule of seminars, including details of guest speakers and corporate members of the month is attached to this report.

Farm Writers competes with a number of other organisations, both agricultural and non-agricultural, in seeking to attract high profile speakers who are time poor. This continues to present a challenge to secure high quality speakers.

Regional Broadcasts

This year we broadcast two of our events, our 40th anniversary celebration and the November presentation, to 9 regional centres with the help of Telstra Country Wide. A total of about 80 people assembled for each broadcast and provided positive feedback. I think this provides an excellent opportunity to extend our forum so that our regionally based members and their guests have the opportunity to hear our influential guest speakers and participate in our discussions. Unfortunately, we have not been able to establish the regular program of regional broadcasts I had hoped.

Website

We have again secured sponsorship to cover the costs of the website with Telstra Country Wide agreeing to continue their sponsorship for 2007/2008. The website is particularly important to our operations as it is the main vehicle for publicising our functions and marketing the Association. It is also the main source of bookings for our functions. We are grateful to Telstra Country Wide for their continued support.

Membership

Membership in 2006/07 remained stable – increasing slightly to 76 (74 in 2005/06) – and we again attracted new corporate members. Support from our corporate membership included the introduction of a significant number of guests to those functions whose topic is of particular relevance to the corporate member involved. The committee appreciates this support and should continue to facilitate it.

Membership renewals for 2007/08 are disappointing with numbers falling significantly in all categories of membership to just over half the number recorded in 2006/07. Clearly one of the tasks for your new committee should be identifying the reasons for this and taking steps to build numbers up again.

ACAJ and IFAJ

Farm Writers continues to provide financial and other support to the Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists (ACAJ) and its programs. Vice President, Colin Munro is the immediate past president of ACAJ and continues to serve on the ACAJ Executive. I have taken on the role of Secretary and Public Officer.

It has been customary for Farm Writers' to provide financial support for delegates to attend the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) annual congress. This year we funded registrations for two delegates (who had to fund their own travel costs) to attend the Congress in Japan in September 2007 – Matthew Cawood, the winner of the NSW prize for rural writing, and Neil Inall, the member who made the most compelling case to represent us at the Congress. From early reports by Mr Inall, the Congress was "a masterpiece of organisation" for the 200 delegates from 25 countries (a total of 6 from Australia). Both our delegates will be reporting to members on the Congress and their experiences.

Star Prize 2007

The Association again presented an award for rural writing in NSW that was structured to conform to the rules of the IFAJ Star Prize for farm writing so that the winner could be entered as the NSW finalist in the ACAJ's competition to find Australia's entrant in the IFAJ contest. Only one entry is permitted from each IFAJ-member country in any year.

Armidale based journalist Matthew Cawood won the NSW award for an article entitled 'Guyra graziers locked into cells' published in *The Land* newspaper on 16th November 2006. Farm Writers purchased Matthew's registration at the IFAJ Congress in Japan as part of his prize. Matthew has recently returned from the Congress and his reports will be available to members shortly.

The national award, a cash prize of \$1,000 sponsored by John Deere, went to Aimee Pedler, a senior journalist with the *Stock Journal* for an investigative article looking at a critical shortage of agricultural teachers in South Australia.

The Australian Star Prize for Rural Photography – which Farm Writers' Association does not participate in because our members can enter the international competition directly – also went to a South Australian, Tait Schmaal from the *Adelaide Advertiser*.

Alltech Young Leaders in Agricultural Journalism award 2007

Alltech were so impressed with the quality of Australian entrants and the success of the award, which was run for the first time last year as part of IFAJ's professional development program, that Alltech Australia were easily persuaded to repeat the exercise in Australia this year. I am pleased to report that they will do it again in 2008.

The 2007 award went to a print journalist, Paul Hooper, from Western Australia. Paul was selected by ACAJ from a field of outstanding candidates that again included Rural Press Canberra bureau chief, Lucy Skuthorp.

I take this opportunity to again congratulate Lucy and Matthew and thank life member Don Jones and Lucy Broad of Cox Inall, who judged the competitions.

The coming year

If re-elected I will continue, with the support of the new committee, to pursue the challenge of providing a varied program of high profile speakers on topical issues. I would like to establish a program of regular (perhaps quarterly) regional broadcasts in an effort to expand our reach and profile. I also propose to continue the awards and, if we can muster sufficient support, introduce two new ones in an effort to recognise and encourage excellence amongst more of our members. We will explore options for other events providing networking and professional development opportunities and we will attempt to reverse declining renewals. We will also continue efforts to improve our administrative processes taking advantage of technology where possible.

In closing, I thank members for the opportunity of serving as President and assure you that, if re-elected, I will apply the same effort to the tasks ahead.

Yours sincerely



Beverley Jordan
President.

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**Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc
Seminars 2006/2007**

Date	Function Venue	Speaker	Topic	Corporate Members of the Month	Number
Wednesday, 2 August 2006	Lunch Menzies	The Hon Jeff Kennett AC, Chairman Beyond Blue	<i>Tackling farming's emotional toll</i>	Jocellin Jansson & Assoc and MN+	85
Friday, 25 August 2006	Lunch Menzies	Rob Holle, MD Solutions Marketing & Research	<i>Does doing good pay? Social Responsible Marketing.</i>	Landmark	49
Friday, 29 September 2006	Lunch Menzies	J B Fairfax, AM, Chairman, Marinya Media & Rural Press	<i>The future of rural and regional media</i>	Renard and Uni of Sydney	106
Friday, 27 October 2006	Lunch Menzies	Phil Lockyer, Communications Manager, Aboriginal Employment Service	<i>Corporate job strategies making a difference.</i>	Cox Inall Communications	36
Friday, 24 November 2006	Lunch Menzies	Phil Burgess, Group MD Public Policy and Communication, Telstra	<i>Regulation and its affect on the future of rural and regional telecommunications</i>	imc	44
Wed, 13 December 2006	Lunch Parliament House	The Hon I Macdonald, NSW Minister for Primary Industries	<i>Key issues for Primary Industries, Mineral and Natural Resources</i>	NAB, Vibac, Sunrice	123
Friday, 23 February 2007	Lunch Menzies	Antony Green ABC election analyst	<i>The rise of rural Independents in NSW</i>	Hassall & Associates and AWI	57
Friday, 30 March 2007	Lunch Menzies	Peter Howard, OzePulse Richard Clarke, Senior VP NSW Farmers	<i>Single desk – the pros and cons</i>	Rabobank and Rimfire Resources	45
Friday, 27 April 2007	Lunch Menzies	David Cattanach, farmer and Nuffield Scholar	<i>Climate Change: A View from the Farm</i>	Telstra Country Wide	42
Wednesday 9 May 2007	Breakfast Menzies	The Hon Sussan Ley, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry	<i>Implications of the 2007 Commonwealth budget for agriculture and regional NSW</i>	HAL and MLA	60
Friday, 29 June 2007	Lunch Menzies	Dr Wendy Craik, Chief Executive, Murray Darling Basin Commission	<i>Is the Murray-Darling Basin in Crisis or is it just dry?</i>	ANZ and PPB	79