



## **Presidents Report**

### **2009 Annual General Meeting**

I welcome you all to the 2009 Annual General Meeting of Active Ageing South Australia Inc.

I offer some observations about the operations and people who have been involved with AASA over the past year. The AASA 2009 Annual Report provides greater detail of how and where AASA has conducted itself over the past year and awaits your attention later if you have not acquainted yourself with it as yet.

The role of the Board is to provide direction for the organisation together with its requirement to meet a range of statutory obligations. The AASA Board meets monthly and on other special occasions to consider its position on many issues and make decisions carefully. Each Board member is firmly committed to AASA with regard to its philosophical position regarding the important and beneficial role of physical activity in enhancing the lives of South Australians.

I would like to acknowledge all Board Members for their contribution to AASA over the past year. To Michele Sutherland, Jan Martin and Anne Henderson, Brett Hill and Bob Penhall plus Rob Williams through your brief but informative time with us, thank you all for the year's contribution.

Probably the single most important job of the Board is to appoint its Executive Officer and I must comment that as an organisation we have developed considerable skill and experience in this role. Sioux Christensen was recruited within this year and on her resignation was replaced by Acting EO, Barry Couzner, well known to us. Barry has ably taken over the role and assisted us in trying times.

We have recently concluded the recruitment process for the new EO which I expect will be ratified at this evening's Board Meeting.

The staff of AASA are essential to us and without our loyal Tracey Gerhardy the past 20 months may have been quite different. Thank you, Tracey. She has been ably supported by Chelsea Barlow, Teresa Romeo and the assisting volunteers.

The role of consultants within organisations such as AASA is always a topic of discussion but quite frankly our survival depends on the availability of such people. Our colleague, Pauline Brooks, has as ever, been a mainstay of many of our programs offering more than just hours worked through her energetic

support for the organisation. Our growing number of interstate consultants has remained stable while we piece together a future for such programs as EMAA. One area that I must mention is our ongoing collaboration and partnering with other organisations mentioned in the Annual report. One relationship in particular is with Human Kinetics who through Chris Halbert has remained a strong supporter through our common value of the role of physical activity across the lifespan.

A bright future is available to us...

The last 12 months has continued to present AASA and the Board with challenges that have provided a stimulus for many positive developments in our organisation. I would like to mention a few issues for consideration.

Active Ageing has maintained a relatively low public profile with little change over the past 12 months. Like many organisations we are often better known interstate or overseas than within our own state. We must take action to ensure we showcase the possibilities that regular physical activity offers our population by providing benefits in physical, social and emotional health. This role of advocacy is essential and is encapsulated by our involvement at different levels with the various significant planning activities of other organisations including State and Federal Governments.

More recently AASA has developed its plan for developing the membership categories which will partly assist us in achieving the profile goal. We view this development as crucial in engaging not only professionals in the field but a broader constituency that will inform and affirm our position within our organisations portfolio of activities.

I would like to emphasise 2 areas of potential in which AAA may find a future direction because of a common alignment of philosophy and direction for action. Both require review in order to identify such commonality.

The first area is the proposed establishment of the National Preventative Health strategy which has been recently launched and awaits legislation at the National level. This may provide an important avenue to widen our scope from the current areas that we excel in such as falls prevention, encouraging increased physical activity in diverse groupings of older adults and training.

We await the implementation strategy that will accompany this initiative with great interest and anticipation.

The second area that may offer a direction is through the recently released Crawford Report challenges some of the funding where emphasis may be better placed on lifetime sport and physical activity options which often remain relatively poorly funded by comparison with low participation sport activities. Australia prides itself on its renowned sporting prowess and we all support this strong emphasis within our culture.

The Crawford Report may also offer an avenue to promote and develop in a vibrant and diverse segment of physical activity – Master's Sport as well as lifelong participation.

Changes may also occur and the area of promoting lifelong physical activity which may be placed in a higher status than at present which will add to the potential profile of AASA.

AASA continues its development and delivery of its range of services including EMAA, HAMP, the Healthy Active Australia project and SA Office for Recreation and Sport IRIS project and within the Falls domain, No-Falls training and the Falls Website project and the ongoing Directories work undertaken for SA Health.

The recently commenced CDSM for Health project offers AASA a pathway for learning and future action. Much will be heard of this project over the next few years.

More than ever AASA has a role to play within our society. The ageing of our population is witnessing a great number of never seen before pressures on individuals and the population as a whole. We need to be part of these debates providing our insight and experience to reach valid conclusions.

As I mentioned last year the impact of chronic disease continues to remain a spectre over our community. Chronic disease reduces individual life outcomes and has multiple effects on the community including social and financial impacts. Together with the growing incidence of larger numbers of people with "pre" chronic condition risk factors such as obesity, inactivity and poor nutritional status, this directs an imperative for AASA to be involved and to take action.

Active Ageing retains its mandate to promote physical activity in its many forms, to the broader population. Now more than ever before Active Ageing must provide leadership in all spheres of our influence by engaging the community through its operations and clearly show what is required to provide best outcomes in health and quality in life.

I would like to acknowledge the Life Members and AAA Ambassadors who diversify the fabric of the organisation. Again, the very important work undertaken by our volunteers must also be recognised, without your help many things would not happen. Life Members, Ambassadors and volunteers are named within the text of the report.

Active Ageing has the ongoing support of the South Australian and Commonwealth Governments through ongoing and project funding provided which positively recognises our value to the community. I acknowledge this support and thank the various Governments.

Our challenge is to look ahead with optimism plan for the benefit of both AAA and the community we serve.

I commend this report to you.

Thank you.

Bob Barnard  
President.