

Council Report for the 38th Annual General Meeting of The Australian Retired Persons Association (SA) Inc.

2020-2021 Council members

President	Anthea Magarey	IT	Barry Apsey
Secretary	Denise McDowell (to January)	Members	Lesley Schoff
Minute secretary	Tin French		Ron Capel (from May)
Treasurer	David Eitzen		
Group Liaison	Elizabeth Alvey		
	Esther Caprez		

It is my pleasure to present ARPA Active Over 50s 38th Annual Report for the year 2020-2021.

Most of us have learnt to live with uncertain times owing to the continued presence of COVID, and the potential for an outbreak in South Australia. However COVID continues to impact on ARPA. While most groups resumed meeting mid 2020 the performance groups were perhaps hit harder than others as they lost all engagements; it was well into 2021 before they could start planning performances again and take bookings. Unfortunately, the impact of changeable attendance on already dwindling numbers and the difficulty of finding Coordinators led to closure of three Regional groups; Magill, Seaford/Moana and Athelstone. Thank you to Group Coordinators and Office Administrator Jessica Puente for being alert to the changing COVID directives and ensuring that groups met all guidelines.

A primary goal for Council this year has been to implement the three key initiatives identified at the Strategic Planning meeting in June 2020, namely: (i) seek advice on raising the public profile of our organisation with the goal to attract more members; (ii) review systems and processes to improve communication flow between central admin and Groups; and (iii) run a campaign to reconnect with those members who declined to renew because activities were suspended as a result of COVID.

The initial task with respect to initiative (i) was to develop a brief and seek interested persons. In responding to the brief Kate McPhee identified the need for a three-stage process; a) fact-finding and development of specific recommendations, b) making changes to ARPA's branding, key communication channels and internal processes and c) rolling out our changes to ARPA's branding and developing tools and Action Plans to implement other recommendations. Using funds received from State and Federal governments, (to specifically assist us with the impact of COVID), Kate was engaged to undertake the first stage of reviewing the organisation. A report with over 40 recommendations was received in June 2021. Implementation of many of these recommendations is currently underway but beyond the scope of this report.

The Group Liaison Committee (Elizabeth Alvey, Esther Caprez and Peter Williams) undertook to work on the second strategy. A key component was revision of the Operating Manual for Groups. This was streamlined into a single manual for all Groups. Importantly, Groups were recognised according to their member and committee size, and monetary turnover, and the reporting requirements tailored accordingly. Five Training Sessions were held for Group committee members to help familiarise them with the new manual, their responsibilities and reporting requirements, and how to manage a series of real-life scenarios, occurrences that could happen at any time in any Group, but fortunately are uncommon. Over 40 Coordinators

and committee members attended, representing over two-thirds of Regional Groups and about half the Activity Groups; thank you to those who took the time to attend. On behalf of all members, I acknowledge and thank all Coordinators and committee members for the considerable hours they contribute to ensure the smooth running of Groups.

Jessica undertook to implement the third strategy with the assistance of the volunteer office staff. Unfortunately only a small proportion agreed to renew their membership.

Central office continues to run smoothly under the very competent direction of Jessica. Early in the year Tracey Tarca resigned; thank you Tracey for the many hours you worked in the office and particularly for helping Jessica as she familiarised herself with operations early in 2020. Jessica has now built a competent team of seven regular front-desk office volunteers, with two others attending weekly for other tasks. You are all very important to the smooth running of ARPA, and we thank you for your time.

As expected historically (but exacerbated by COVID), membership numbers have fallen again this year. We gained 245 new members but 406 members did not renew their membership, resulting in a net loss of 161 and a total membership at June 30 2021 of 1660. The equivalent figures in the previous year were 198 new members and 462 non-renewals. The principal reason for non-renewal has been failing health and/or other circumstances leading to an inability to continue participation, and concern for COVID. This declining membership presents an on-going challenge to balance the budget but I am pleased to report that once again a small operating profit has been achieved. Treasurer David Eitzen deserves particular acknowledgement for managing the finances, with assistance from Jessica and Roy Milne.

Thank you to all Council members for your contribution throughout the year. Unfortunately Denise McDowall resigned in February after 15 months as a Councillor but Ron Capel re-joined in May to serve until the AGM. Two-year terms are up for all other Council members but everyone has agreed to renominate with the exception of Esther Caprez. However Esther will remain on the Group Liaison Committee.

Finally, it is 40 years this year since ARPA SA opened its first office. This is an achievement to celebrate, particularly as the only other surviving branch of the original multi-state organisation is one in Tasmania with less than 100 members. It is probably a stretch to say we are thriving, although I believe the organisation remains strong and has much to offer if only we become better known. A celebratory event will be held in November to mark 40 years of providing activities for older South Australians. That event will also relaunch our organisation, rebranded as Retire Active SA to better reflect who and what we are now.

Anthea Magarey
President