



Queensland Bushfood Association

Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting
8 August 2010

Members and Friends,

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Queensland Bushfood Association. Over our years together we've shaped this occasion to be one where we mix and mingle, share stories and eat....so I'll respect that tradition and keep this formal Chairman's report relatively brief.

We began our year with hope yet the usual signs of shaky foundations.....few nominations for committee positions, a decline in our numbers and a year marked by occasional rather than regular Bulletin issues and activities. Yet our hope prevailed !

Over the year our membership has grown to 41....almost a 25% increase in active membership. One of our new members joined our committee and another joined a newly formed School Project Team....more of that later.

Our numbers are drawn mainly from the Greater Brisbane region with a cluster from the Sunshine Coast and individuals from the Esk, Toowoomba and Northern New South Wales in the Tweed area.

While we are still building up membership profiles to better understand and meet the needs of our members, we know that twenty three express an interest in growing, four in processing, seven in retailing, three in marketing, seven in research and thirteen in cooking.

We issued two Bulletins which set a new standard for qualitythis is a challenge we need to continue to meet since for the majority of our members, our Bulletin is their only contact with the Association's activities. This is well supported by our Secretary's emailing of news and events.

In previous years we have taken a booth at the ABC Gardening Show. The Committee decided against that this year, in part because the cost of involvement had risen. Instead, we accepted the offer of the Herb Society to make our presence felt there. It proved a very good move in that our efforts received significant exposure and we recruited new members. These were the same outcomes we'd hoped for from the Gardening Show.

Again, this year, some of our members continued to write for the national publication, Subtropical Gardening magazine. Their expertise with native species, their propagation, cultivation and use, makes for great material and the magazine's readers will note acknowledgment is given to the Queensland Bushfood Association. While it is not appropriate to identify individual authors in the magazine itself, I want to name Graeme White, John King and John Wrench as the 'faceless men' who have authored articles in whole or part. Other members have assisted with ideas and photographs.

We continue to receive approaches from schools seeking help, guidance and oftentimes just ideas as their curricular planning encourages them to explore indigenous culture and nutritious food styles. While individual members have sometimes responded to these calls the Committee sensed a growing need that we weren't meeting. Accordingly the Committee approached the Minister for Education, offering our assistance to their curriculum area. A polite response expressed their "thanks but no thanks for now" reply and left us to decide to build a package to be made available via our website. I hope this will be a major activity for our new year and an exciting opportunity to showcase the

experience, knowledge, skills and plain commonsense amongst our membership. Gary Young has undertaken to co-ordinate this team project.

We retained our membership in the Australian Native Food Industry Limited company and attended their AGM earlier this year. They briefed us on their current research and the delegates participated in some of their taste testing experimentation as they developed their flavour profiles.

An initiative I personally encouraged and was involved in this past year related to our governance as an association. Our membership is central to our life and potential as an association and our membership register needed tidying up and refreshing. We've pretty much completed that now and the recent call to all members to update their information kept on file will assist us in this. We at last have a current database to allow us to target activities which support members' interests. It is, of course, protected under current privacy legislation.

2010 was a big year as we celebrated our Tenth Anniversary. Those who could join us enjoyed a great afternoon, hosted by Tukka Restaurant and the memories of that day will last for a while...as will the mystery of why the Sunshine Coast contingent walked away with almost all the prizes !

The Anniversary was highlighted by the recognition of the years of commitment by two of our more senior members and the Association granted John King and John Wrench Life membership.

Our Bulletin was issued twice...again, it was a quality publication, thanks to one of our members who brings her skills to the job of arranging and page setting. We need to improve on the frequency of our Bulletin, and aim for four a year. To that end we are looking for someone to step in as editor who can drive the process from scheduling, theme setting, collecting and collating copy and shaping it before submitting it for desk top publishing.

As for the coming year ? Well this is for the new Committee. Let me raise three challenges for them, which build on the solid work done this past year:

1. Continue to improve our Bulletin and work towards four issues in the year, one for each season.
2. Support the work of the School Project Group so we can post on our site a resource that will meet all requirements of a sound, safe resource package that reflects evidence-based knowledge and cultural sensitivity.
3. Schedule at least 2 field days or on site activities so our new members get the opportunity for 'walking and talking' our bush food experience in Queensland.

Let me finish with a sincere thank you to our committee of 2009-10. It's always a pleasant experience to meet in Committee because I know we'll be mixing it with like-minded folks who have a passion for our native foods and flavours. And we do achieve business too ! Thank you Mary, Anne, Graeme, John and Bruce to each and every one of you for your generous display of enthusiasm and giving of your time.

We can all take some satisfaction in knowing our Association has progressed this year because of our individual contributions. We exist for our membership...our challenge is always to keep that in mind as we move into the new year.

Thank You

Doug Brownlow
Chairman 2009-10