



Chairperson's Report to the Annual General Meeting, 5th August 2005

This evening we convene to mark another year in the life of our Queensland Bushfood Association. We both acknowledge what has passed and look to the future with some expectation for what can be, what ought to be and I guess what we'll work at really hard to bring into being !

My task tonight is to reflect on our tracks over the last 12 months since our last AGM.

I can report to you, our members, that QBA is alive and well...and that's always good news at a time when so many challenges confront us as individuals, interest groups, industry participants and especially as citizens and business people exploring the frontier of indigenous food ingredients and products.

Our member register holds some 70 names, although that includes a few who will choose not to renew their membership with us. Very importantly, it includes new names of those who discovered us and have decided to walk with us along these native food trails. Some of our new members have been introduced to us by other members....congratulations to you all. Word of mouth has always been an effective method for spreading our message about Bush Foods. Others of our new members searched the web and found out about us, following the trail to subscription and membership...welcome and congratulations !

Our website, www.qldbushfood.com, marks a new threshold for QBA. It opens new doors to many who want to satisfy their curiosity or, even better, their appetites. It was a great effort endorsed by the Management Committee early in this year and progressed with a passion by our Secretary Lynne Paterson. Lynne, along with a contracted web designer and myself, worked on designing and building a site that could further the aims of our Constitution. It provides new opportunities for each of our members to find exposure for their interests and, indeed, their business interests. I want to record here the appreciation we all owe Lynne and Dale, the designer, for their work on our site. My regret is the slow response rate to the call to submit our profiles for inclusion on the site. I confess I finish this year wondering why so many of us did not respond to the opportunity to go global via the web !

Another first for QBA this year is a work still in progress. We were successful in nominating one of our members, an experienced propagator, for membership on a ministerial advisory committee tasked with reviewing plant protection legislation. Graeme White, our Director, has invested considerable time and energy in working closely with us to ensure our voice is heard at Committee level. We are currently finalising a submission to that committee process and Graeme will be going in to bat for us later this month. Graeme, I want to acknowledge your generous and skilled efforts throughout the year, and particularly on this matter.

Another first for us this year was our endorsing a submission by the Noonga Reconciliation group to government for a grant to support their indigiscapes project. It was very satisfying to see Noonga succeed in their application. QBA again demonstrated we are serious about our charter.

I also want to bring forward for our appreciation, both our Treasurer, Anne Osborne and Director, John Wrench for their many hours of extra work on behalf of the Association. Anne brings her legal and accountancy qualifications and experience to our Management Committee meetings and maintains the flow of cash into and out of our coffers...and all this while building up her own business and attending ceremonies to be feted as Rural Woman of the Year ! John, for his part, as we all know, is a sheer treasure trove of information, energy and excitement on all matters of Bush Food. He represented us on his recent trip to Nice and reported back to us with some encouraging news. John continues to find time to join us at Management Meetings and after much encouragement, will often share his thoughts with us (!).

Most of our Management Committee meetings were held at a member's property and the business was matched with casual dining, all making for a productive and pleasant occasion. We found this extra dimension to our business helped our networking and information sharing. I believe we can and ought to do more of this with our QBA activities. And here I want to publicly express my deepest appreciation for my wife Kath, the love of my life. My job as Chairperson was only do-able because of her support in every aspect of the role....thank you, Kath.

I have not mentioned by name those loyal members, many of them with us since the early days, who have spent hours on QBA business. Attending a special workshop, preparing draft documents, offering advice based on their years of experience. Thank you on our behalf.

Finally, I want to make special mention of our more remote members. I'm referring to those loyal QBA people who are busy about their lives and business in the scrub and for whom distance is too great a barrier for them to join our meetings. We receive emails from some of you and other forms of contact and it's critically important for all of us to remember you are one with us. "Out of sight" must never mean "out of mind". We exist because of you and to support you and we need your support in our efforts.

My hope would be that in the coming years we can arrange gatherings of QBA and like-minded people on sites where efforts are being made to further the interests of Bush Food in Queensland. Field Days are great opportunities for meeting and sharing our interests and for bringing our more remote members and the coastal crowd together ! Maybe next year !

My thanks to you all for your support over the year and for the very generous efforts of those who work to keep QBA alive and well and active.

Doug Brownlow
QBA Chairperson 2004-5