



Chairperson's Report to the Annual General Meeting, 4th August 2006

It doesn't seem like a year has passed since I reported at our last AGM that "...QBA is alive and well..." The last twelve months have certainly testified to that as we count the number of activities we have hosted, helped organise, participated in or advertised on behalf of other associations. Yes, the 2005-6 year has been busy.

Some of the more prominent events included the food safety workshops QBA organised in the south east quarter for Dr John Faragher of the Victorian Department of Primary Industry. While numbers may not have been as high as we had hoped, John's willingness to make himself available at our convenience and his availability over the time gave a number of us the opportunity we sought to clarify some key issues. A special thanks are due to our friends in the Sub-Tropical Fruit Club of Queensland, some of whom joined with us for the Brisbane Workshop. We were also pleased to be able to assist our colleagues in the North, when the members of the Native Food Association of Far North Queensland planned a workshop in Cairns for the folks up there.

We continued to make representation to the state ministerial advisory committee addressing legislation governing protected plants. Again, Graeme White was our delegate there and he has worked closely with other members of that group to ensure our interests are acknowledged in the review process.

In 2006 we at last saw the introduction of a long awaited initiative: the provision of field day activities scheduled between the four regular meeting dates. While we were slow getting of the mark and we didn't finalise all the events planned for the time, we did enjoy a day with Veronica and Graeme at Witjuti on the Sunshine Coast and some of us joined with John Wrench and Jim Hansen at Huxtable Park at Chermside for a day of planting and feasting. The calendar is looking full for the coming months and I would encourage all of us to consider joining in. I want to especially acknowledge Lynne Paterson, our retiring secretary, for her work in developing and progressing this initiative...the calendar has been a dream Lynne has shared with the Management Committee for many months.

To those of our members in the more distant parts of the state, you might like to consider some sort of QBA-type local initiative for the members and their friends living in those parts. We found the Brisbane occasion a great opportunity for sharing our knowledge and skills with friends who wanted to know more about native plants, their selection, cultivation and use.

As an Association, we enjoyed witnessing one of our members being acknowledged at both the state and national levels for her initiative and energy when Martha Shepherd was awarded the 2006 RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year Award at both levels. Congratulations, Martha on your dedication and determination. And we know David shares in your reward too, as your partner in every sense.

Another development in 2006 is one worth watching. After eighteen months of hard ground breaking work, the initiative to establish a true peak industry body as an incorporated entity, the Australian Native Food Industry, has started to take shape. QBA has more recently played a key role in this development. I was asked to join the Interim Board early in 2006 to help steer and shape its formation and Anne Osborne has taken up the task of drafting the Constitution that we will take to the incorporation process. I believe ANFI will become a most significant entity in the Australian industry and one that QBA may want to develop closer liaison with in the coming years. It is clear that much funding for research and development is contingent upon an organisation being incorporated, having a strategic framework and plan and demonstrating inclusiveness. ANFI promises to build that profile.

Our website continued operating over this last year and was responsible for a number of inquiries from members of the public. Regrettably, I have fallen fall too short in my responsibility as the 'Web Master' and I need to devote more time to both developing my skills and maintaining the site. That, and my work with the ANFI initiative, prevent me from standing for a Committee position in the coming year.

Therefore, in this my last Chairperson's Report, I want to thank all our members for your loyal membership over the year and especially your participation in whatever you could, however you could, during the year.

There is no doubt that our Management Committee has been a creative band during the year: Anne Osborne, Lynne Paterson, Graeme White, John Wrench and Jim Hansen....we've not been short of new, sound ideas. I want to honour each of them for their generous and committed time and effort. I include my wife Kath here because she has helped make my involvement possible and enjoyable through her understanding and assistance. The momentum of this last twelve months needs to keep going if you, the members, want it to. The Committee needs your involvement to get ideas into place. We simply need more 'doers' in QBA, people who can come forward to offer their time and assistance in practical ways. The Committee can't do it all themselves....we need you !

So thank you for your support and like you, I'm looking forward to being a part of our Association as we go from strength to strength and continue to enjoy the fruits of our labours and interest...Bush Foods !

Doug Brownlow
QBA Chairperson 2005-6