



## **AWCIANZ Annual Report: 2007 - 2008**

### **Overview:**

This Annual Report for the 2007 - 2008 year records some significant changes for the Association. The first full financial year for AWCIANZ (AWCI) saw measurable change from the previous program for FWCIANZ. The changes planned, proposed and subsequently implemented were intended to benefit the industry and grow the role and responsibilities of the national office of the Association. This report demonstrates that intention is being delivered.

In the previous year the business plan for an alternative Federation model was both widely viewed and discussed. Two members of the Executive - Dan McMillan & Bernie Biggs - visited each state and addressed members on the details of the proposed business plan and its implementation. The appointment of an executive director in early 2007 provided the driving mechanism for the ongoing development of the organisation at a national level.

### **Executive Committee:**

The National Executive Committee undertook to be more visible to all members nationally. This included listing the national council members' details on the web site. State AWCI members were encouraged to bring matters to the EC through their state representative.

The Executive Committee met in August 2007, October 2007 in conjunction with the National Conference, then in December 2007, March 2008 and June 2008 under the Presidency of Harry Chudasko (Victoria - to October 2007). Subsequently, the Annual General Meeting appointed Life Member Bill Whiddon (NSW) as President in October 2007.

Other Officers appointed at the AGM were Perry Richardson (Queensland) as Vice-President and Harry Chudasko as Treasurer. Other Executive Committee members are listed in the auditor's report and in the Annual Return to the Registry of Cooperatives and Associations.

### **Finances:**

John Bricher (South Australia) was appointed as Treasurer for the first period of 2007- 2008 up to the AGM, when Harry Chudasko was elected as Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for management of finances and reporting to the Executive Committee on the Association's financial status. The previous Auditors, Adelaide-based Grant Thornton resigned immediately after the AGM because of the relocation of the financial management to the National Office in Sydney. Younis & Co of North Parramatta were appointed as auditors for the 2007-2008 year.

The report from the auditor for the 2007-2008 year revealed a profit of \$36,773, with total assets of \$104,339. The auditor's financial report will be sent to members along with the AGM notice.

The day-to-day management of finances and bank transactions was transferred to the National Office with effect from July 1, 2008. Monthly financial reports were provided to members of the Executive Committee. A move to on-line banking during the year meant that real time information on the Association's banking and payments was available. This on-line access was restricted to

bank account information sourcing only, so as to satisfy the constitutional requirement that all payments require two approved signatories.

AWCI has returned its BAS documentation each quarter.

### **AWCI National Office:**

Since March 2007 the AWCI National office has been located in the AWCI NSW premises in Parramatta. Staffing has comprised the executive director, Allen Morley and Bookkeeper/Assistant Natalie Werch. The postal address used is now the street address as a result of objections from AWCI NSW about the use of their PO Box. AWCI pays a monthly rental of \$1100 (including GST) and a percentage of electricity usage. The local Westpac branch has been used for dealings involving banking for the Association, although the actual account branch is in Elsternwick, Victoria.

### **Communication:**

The association website has provided a reporting and information channel for Members and contributed to the raising of the profile of the organisation. Changes have been made to increase the scope of reporting and to provide access to technical and operational details. The rate of hits has increased with time.

The national e-newsletter called *Surfaces ... AWCI downunder* began as a monthly communiqué. It also appears on the website for wider dissemination. The website url was changed during the year – to [www.awci.org.au](http://www.awci.org.au) - in order to be consistent with the change of organisational name. The old [www.fwcianz.com](http://www.fwcianz.com) url registration has been maintained. A *Members' Only* section has been established on the website and regular news updates are posted on the website.

One of the communication initiatives during the reporting period was planning the setting up of a national magazine. Several options were investigated and Great Southern Press, a publisher with considerable association magazine experience, presented their proposal to the Executive Committee at the June meeting.

Following an initiative begun by AWCI WA, a national industry enterprise to market employment in the wall and linings sector was released. Called *The best kept secret in the building industry; the wall and ceiling industry* the DVD comprising both a four minute and a twelve minute message on this sector, was released nationally. It has been used extensively via school careers teachers and has been particularly well received. A copy was provided for every member throughout Australia. It will assume a vital ongoing role in the AWCI program looking at school-based plastering apprenticeships.

The 2007 National Conference held in Melbourne during October was a success. The Conference was reasonably attended and delegates enjoyed a busy program. The activities included a WorldSkills competition for apprentices and a strong technical agenda for the Conference proper.

### **Technical:**

During the reporting period Bernie Biggs has carried responsibility for the technical issues, which encompass Australian Standards, passive fire protection, OH&S matters, Technical Councils and skills recognition.

At the 2007 National Conference there was a name change for the major technical committee. This committee is now called the Linings Council. It has been active following the release of the updated Australian Standard 2589, which at last saw the light of day on Christmas Eve.

The OH&S initiative *It's not a BOARD GAME ... safe work practices for plasterers*, has been used extensively for induction and re-training. Stilt useage remains a contentious issue with the

regulators in NSW and the AWCI NSW Committee has succeeded in obtaining a research grant for a review by Ballarat University. An additional grant concentrating on plasterboard lifters was also provided for the AWCI NSW Committee.

### **Training:**

One of the key action elements for the year was to establish the AWCI Group Training Scheme. The name AWCIGTS was registered and the project incorporated under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act. Then came the task of preparing the necessary documentation to achieve Registration by the NSW Department of Education and Training. That documentation was submitted and following a desk audit, a site audit was carried out in May.

Overall, AWCIGTS got through most of the checks and the subsequent program was to complete the areas needing further attention and resubmit the registration gap material. This was done in July 2008.

AWCI developed a proposal for submission to GBMA seeking the introduction of a production levy to fund the AWCIGTS and the association. That was presented to a GBMA meeting in early July 2008.

### **Membership:**

A focus upon increasing national membership proceeded during the reporting period, but at a lesser priority than the focus on AWCIGTS. Following the completion of the AWCIGTS the recruiting program has been upgraded with some success. BGC agreed to take up membership from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 and US company On Center Software applied for membership. Membership numbers for the State AWCI's remained fairly static.

Close links were established with the associations AWCI US and fpdc in the UK. Some exchange of material has taken place. Discussions on reciprocal Affiliate membership with The Frame and Truss Association of Australia, Australian Institute of Building Surveyors and the US Association Ceilings & Interior Systems Construction Association (CISCA) were pursued.

Honorary Life membership was awarded to Brian Huxley, Tasmanian Secretary to reflect his contribution to AWCI over an extended period. Terry Bell, who represented Winstone Wallboards and AWCI NZ on the AWCI Executive Committee for many years, took early retirement. His presence and experience-based advice will be sorely missed.

### **Other Program Components:**

Other highlights from the year under review were:

- Establishment of a national insurance program with Wesfarmers Federation Insurance
- Creation of a strategic arrangement with Mel Crook and Associates providing OH&S and environmental services to members, with an initial free consultation
- Representation at the AWCINZ annual conference at Taupo in July 2007
- A meeting between the Executive Committee and GBMA members in March 2008
- The national office worked with AWCI Qld on venues and a draft program for the 2009 Conference.