

ADRA

Australian Dispute Resolution Association Inc.
Established 1987

Annual Report 2003

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ADRA Board Members 2002 – 2003

President

Val Sinclair

Deputy President

Salli Browning

Secretary

\ Paula Castile

Treasurer

Albertje Gurley

Newsletter Editor

Frank Astill

Board Members

**Garth Brown
Katherine Johnson
Peter James
David West
Sally Trevena
Peter Irving
\ Glynn O'Neill**

Annual Report 2003

Contents

President's Report	Page 4
Membership Services Report	Page 7
Special General Meeting Report	Page 9
Treasurer's Report	Page 10
Statements of Revenue and Expenditure	Page 11
Balance Sheets	Page 12

President's Report

The 2002/2003 year has been a year of achievement for the Board of Management. The planning and structures established last year have enabled the Board to achieve their primary goal of developing our membership services.

Planning Meeting

Our planning meeting held in December, 2002 established a number of objectives for 2003.

The primary goal was to improve our information services to members. In particular to ensure that:

- Our response to telephone enquiries was immediate
- ADRA's Membership information was developed
- Our Website was upgraded
- The proposed changes to our Newsletter were implemented

The Board also wanted to ensure that we continued to provide seminars and networking meetings that were of interest and relevant to members.

The implementation of the changes to the Constitution to eliminate the need for an Auditor moved at the AGM in 2002 was a first priority.

An important goal was to maintain the reduction in expenses that was achieved by the Board last year.

Goals in progress were to provide submissions and lobby as required to continue the development of links and alliances with other organisations. ADRA is also committed to continue to explore the issues of mediation practice standards and a representative body for ADR practitioners.

Achievements

Our primary goals of improving access to relevant information for our members by upgrading our Website and establishing a regular Newsletter for members have been achieved.

Members can now access information and our Newsletter on our Website. Prospective Members from Australia and around the world can join ADRA via our Website. Our membership services report gives more information about current and future services that can be offered from our Website.

These achievements would not have been possible without the outstanding team effort of the Newsletter Committee. Congratulations and thanks to Salli Browning Frank Astill and David West for their hard work and valuable contributions.

ADRA now has a new brilliantly designed Membership Brochure. We give our very special thanks to Chris Astill whose design and technical skills were responsible for both the Membership Brochure and our outstanding new Website. We can't thank you enough Chris and highly recommend your skills to everyone.

Thanks also to Graham King Computer expert extraordinaire who has been responsible for upgrading our Membership Data Base processes so that they are functional at last.

ADRA held several successful seminars and networking meetings this year. The Membership services report gives details. ADRA's aim is to increase the number of seminars offered and to include at least one skills based workshop.

ADRA and other Organisations

ADRA has continued to liaise and develop relationships with other Organisations this year.

The NADRAC - Conference ADR – A Better Way to do Business – was held on 4-5 September at the Sheraton on the Park Hotel Sydney. ADRA played a role in publicising the Conference. Our logo was included in the Conference Brochure and our Membership Material and Newsletter was available for those attending the Conference.

ADRA has maintained our links with SOCAP (Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals) and assisted in the promotion of the SOCAP Conference in August.

ADRA has also been involved in the re-establishment of meetings with other ADR Organisations originally initiated by the Lets Talk Group. The first meeting was arranged and facilitated by Bernard Ripperger from the Australian Commercial Disputes Centre (ACDC). The main agenda item was the development of ADR practice standards and discussions focused on how this might be achieved. There should be further developments in this area next year.

With thanks to.....

ADRA would not have been able to function and achieve our goals this year without the assistance of Peter James. ADRA's Office in James Legal and our monthly meeting room are made available to us with the kind support of Peter James. Peter in his role as a board member has also made valuable contributions with his expert legal drafting of the changes to the Constitution tabled at our Special General Meeting. Our sincere thanks for your contributions to ADRA Peter.

Unfortunately, we lost three board members during the year. Peter Irving and Glynn O'Neil were unable to contribute as they had wished owing to work and family commitments. Paula Castile felt that she needed to resign owing to her own illness and the illness of her mother. Paula has made significant contributions to ADRA during her roles as Treasurer and Secretary. Thank you Paula for your hard work that was made all the more valuable by being undertaken while you were managing ill health.

Thank you to all Board Members this year for your contributions. Salli Browning as Deputy President for your consistent support and role on the Newsletter Committee. Frank Astill and David West for your great ideas and valuable contributions. Thanks to Katherine Johnson, Garth Brown and Sally Trevena for your consistent and valued contributions. Thanks also to Albertje Gurley for her work as Treasurer.

The year ahead will be an exciting one for ADRA. The structures, processes and membership services are now in place for the Board to focus on increasing membership and making significant contributions to the ADR Industry. I have now served two years as President and in accordance with the Constitution look forward to handing over this position to a new President who I am sure will facilitate ADRA's continued development in accordance with the needs of our members and the industry as a whole.

Val Sinclair
President

Membership Services Report

During the year the ADRA Board reviewed the role of ADRA in the light of views expressed by members. The need that was most clearly identified was for information about what was happening in ADR. As more organisations have been established and practice diversified there was a feeling among some members that it was easy to lose touch quickly.

ADRA's response has been to continue to hold and promote seminars of interest to members; to produce a Newsletter; to initiate a re-designed website; to liaise closely with other ADR bodies; and to re-design the membership brochure so that it was more informative and able to be produced to a higher standard. The Board feels strongly that ADRA is for the whole ADR community and has an important role to play in maintaining links between organisations and individuals and in acting as a source and repository of ADR information.

Functions for Members

In March ADRA started the year with Members Networking Drinks following the Special General Meeting.

The ADRA Seminars in 2003 featured a timely and informative talk by Justice Terry Sheahan about the new mediation-arbitration procedures in the Workers Compensation Commission. "We are the biggest ADR shop in town" – Justice Sheahan went on to outline the objectives and procedures of the Workers Compensation Commission. The attentive audience was treated to a lively and candid account of the revolution from litigation to a blended mediation-arbitration model that now drives workplace claims. The President gave generously of his time, experience and expertise, staying to answer questions and continue the lively discussions.

The next valuable Seminar centred on an update of the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council's (NADRAC) activities by NADRAC member John Hannaford. The talk focused on the coming NADRAC Conference and a central underlying issue of whether it was possible to have a national umbrella organisation for ADR practitioners. An interesting and lively discussion followed between John and practitioners about a National Body for ADR practitioners and how this may be funded. Discussions closed with the question – Can you make a living as an ADR practitioner?

Coming seminars include one about Lawyers' use and attitudes to Primary Dispute Resolution in Family Law presented by Associate Professor Tom Altobelli from the School of Law, University of Western Sydney.

ADRA would like to thank the Law Society of New South Wales for its co-operation in providing such hospitable premises for our seminars.

ADRA Newsletter

The first ADRA Newsletter was published in August, 2003 and has been very favourably received. The first issue was posted to members (with the additional aim of updating our database) and subsequent issues will be distributed electronically where possible. The newsletter carries reports of ADRA activities and seeks to gather general ADR news, legislation and policy updates, NADRAC information, articles and information about upcoming events, speakers, Conferences and publications. Education and Training information from a range of course providers is included.

ADRA Website

ADRA launched our new Website at www.adra.net.au. The Board plans for the progressive addition of resources and links so that our website becomes a major focus of communication with members. Information for members including current and past ADRA newsletters will be available on the website.

Membership Service Development

The Board will build on these developments so that ADRA members are well-informed about the world of ADR and are able to attend functions where matters are presented, discussed and debated. The Board meets each month to develop policies, plan activities and deal with ongoing business including membership applications. The board would like to members to keep them informed about what their needs are and how ADRA can best meet their needs.

Special General Meeting Report

In March the Board called a Special General Meeting of members to consider the approval of modifications to the Constitution. The amendments addressed the following two issues.

Sending of Notices to Members

The word "mailed" was used in the Constitution in relation to sending notices to members. It was approved by the meeting that a definition for "mailed" be inserted in the reference section of the Constitution to indicate that "mailed" means that ADRA may send notices to members by post, facsimile, electronic mail or in the form of electronic transmission according to each members preferences.

To Dispense with the Auditor

The Constitution required the financial statements of ADRA to be audited each year. Audit fees have risen markedly in recent times and had represented a significant proportion of ADRA's expenses.

The approved modifications removed the need for audited financial statements and the appointment of an Auditor. In it's place it was approved that each year an Accountant is to certify the accuracy of the financial statements to be presented at the Annual General Meeting. The Accountant is to be nominated by the Board each year.

The purpose of the approved amendments was to reduce costs and facilitate more efficient management of the Association.

Treasurer's Report

The Board's planned overall reduction in expenditure has been achieved this year. In particular rent and publication expenses have been significantly reduced. These reductions have meant that new expenditure on Computer Consultant's fees for the membership data base and the website development has been absorbed without an increase in overall expenditure.

Revenue is shown as less than last year. The reduced Membership fees shown for 2003 can be explained by \$1,100 of 2003 fees being included in 2002 revenue as they were paid early by Members at our Anniversary dinner and banked with function revenue. Last years function revenue reflects the greater than usual income generated from our Theatre night and the Anniversary dinner.

The net operating loss is the lowest achieved for the last six years and it is to be hoped that the downward trend continues in the year ahead. This would be assisted by a function or seminar that raised revenue and the increased revenue generated by new membership.

There are accumulated surplus members' funds that have ensured that any operating loss is always met. Until a significant operating surplus is achieved the retention of these funds will cover any future operating loss.

Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ended 30th September, 2003

2002	REVENUE	2003
5,455	Conference and Function receipts	635
8,575	Membership subscriptions	5,815 *
-	Electricity Refund	139
14,030		6,589
2002	EXPENDITURE	2003
1,122 ✓	Audit Fees	-
68 ✓	Bank Charges and State Tax	25
5,466 ⁵⁴⁵¹	Conference and Function expenses	264
✓ 618	Depreciation	463
174 ²⁰⁸	Electricity	118
1,270 ✓	Insurance	-
1,278 ✓	Newsletter and Publications	758
706 ✓	Postage	607
306 ✓	Printing and Stationery	673
4,002 ✓	Rent	2,720
61 ✓	Sundry Expenses	221
523 ✓	Telephone/Internet/Web	1,059
-	Traveling and Entertainment	-
-	Wages/Consultancy Fees	1,123
15,594		8,031
1,564	Loss for year	1,442
	OTHER INCOME	
37	Interest received	52
1,527	NET OPERATING LOSS	1,390
11,070	Retained Profits – Beginning of Year	10,170
10,170	ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AT 30th SEPTEMBER, 2003	8,780

\$9,443.00

Balance Sheet as at 30th September, 2003

2002	CURRENT ASSETS	2003
990	Cash at Bank	42
<u>7,827</u>	Cash Management Account	<u>7,848</u>
<u>8,817</u>		<u>7,890</u>
<hr/>		
1,853	FIXED ASSETS	
	Plant and equipment	1,390
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10,670	TOTAL ASSETS	9,280
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500	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
	Other Creditors	500
<hr/>		<hr/>
10,170	NET ASSETS	8,780
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10,170	MEMBERS FUNDS	
	Accumulated Surplus	<u>8,780</u>

Note: A Certificate of Accuracy is yet to be obtained for these accounts