

ADRA

Annual Report 2006

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR ADRA AGM, October 2006

This has been a very busy year and I wish to begin by personally thanking the executive members for their continued support and efforts throughout the year.

The year began with a very successful planning session on 4 February 2006, where we planned the events for the year, set meeting dates for every month and seminar dates and outlined contingency plans in the event that our preferred guest speakers were unavailable.

Having previously been on the LEADR NSW executive panel for three years from 2003-2005 and 1 year prior to that on the LEADR National Executive Panel (2002), I continued to attempt further collaboration between ADRA and all other ADR providers.

In early February I received a phone call from the Chair of LEADR's NSW Executive Panel, Jeremy Bluhm, with a request to answer questions for LEADR's data base. In response we invited Jeremy to attend our March meeting where free discussion was held with the executive members of ADRA in answer to questions LEADR requested for its data base. To further promote the spirit of collaboration we invited LEADR to consider joint ventures with ADRA in the form of presenting joint seminars etc. The result of this proposal to date has been satisfactory in relation to maintaining joint initiatives to advertise each other's functions and has left the possibility open for future joint ventures.

On 12 April, 2006 our first seminar of the year was held with Tom Altobelli as our guest speaker. The topic of the seminar was on the new changes in Family Law Legislation in relation to the use of Dispute Resolution. Tom's seminar was very well attended and well received having raised many key issues about the use of Dispute Resolution Practitioners in Family Law and set the scene for ADRA's continuing interest in the issue of Accreditation of Mediators. We note that Tom has lately been appointed to the Federal Magistrates Court and we congratulate him as His Honour.

On 2-5 May 2006 the National Mediation Conference was held in Hobart and ADRA hosted a lunch time meeting on 3 May to which representatives of at least 10 different National ADR groups were personally invited and 16 people attended. Questions were raised about the accreditation of all mediators as a response to the Draft of Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners Qualifications Framework presented by the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council and the Attorney General's Department. Although some consensus began to arise at the meeting, further discussion was left in abeyance and at the end of the Conference, there was very little consensus about the best way to move forward in a unified manner as an ADR profession. Indeed the very issue of whether ADR is a profession at all became a debated issue.

As President of ADRA I also attended an afternoon meeting on 4 May hosted by IAMA at the National Conference. In the spirit of collaboration, support for ADRA's hosting the next Mediation Conference in Sydney was given by IAMA

and joint submissions were considered regarding the issue of accreditation of mediators invoked by the Skills Council and the Attorney General's Department (AGD) dealing with Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners Qualifications.

The Conference conclusion in regards to the two issues of Mediator Accreditation and submissions for the venue of the next Mediator conference, was that an email would be sent to all interested parties about both issues. In regard to the issue of Mediator Accreditation, parties wishing to join the various Committees of the National Mediation Conference would be considered at the respective Executive Committee in question as a matter of course once interest was made known. No further resolution was made regarding that issue at the Conference.

Following the National Mediation Conference ADRA forwarded submissions to hold the 2008 National Mediation Conference in Sydney and had the support of many ADR groups in Sydney. We thank all our colleagues who so willingly and readily supported us in this regard. Although we were ultimately unsuccessful in the bid, we received extremely positive feedback on our submissions and were told that the decision between the two final contenders ultimately came to a "...show of hands" with Perth winning the bid. ADRA congratulates WADRA on their bid and we look forward to a very exciting Conference in Perth in 2008.

I also wish to personally thank the Executive members of ADRA who worked tirelessly to meet the deadlines for submissions to host the next National Conference in Sydney, simultaneously maintaining regular meetings and regular seminar presentations as initially planned in February. As I have already stated it has indeed been an extremely busy and eventful year.

In June 2006, we hosted our second seminar on the Kyoto Treaty with Jennifer Scott. So impressed were all those who attended, that another session with Jennifer on follow-up to the Kyoto Treaty has been booked for 2007. Jennifer's presentation like Tom's before her were excellent living examples of the intricate steps required for successful resolution in areas fraught with mine fields. We thank both presenters for their very engaging sessions.

In July 2006, following the National Conference in the spirit of continued collaboration, ADRA and IAMA jointly hosted a meeting at IAMA's office in Phillip Street, Sydney. Approximately 20 people attended representing the majority of ADR groups in Sydney. The purpose of the meeting was to consider outcomes of surveys by Kim Farrant and her associates from the Attorney General's Department regarding the Third Draft of the Family Dispute Resolution Qualifications Framework and the Vocational Graduate Diploma Dispute Resolution.

The gist of the presentation was the development of draft Family Dispute Resolution qualifications and competency units structured on the basis of research and incorporating Industry feedback. ADR groups in Sydney and NSW were asked to make submissions in relation to the Draft. The 150 page Draft was discussed at length and further comments about the draft policy were invited by all the groups present. It was agreed that a follow up of this meeting should

occur later in the year. When attempts to do so were made in early September, it was considered prudent to leave it until early next year once the suggestions in the Third Draft were adequately considered allowing for further discussion.

ADRA thanks the Attorney General's Department for their continued efforts in this area and recognizes not only the enormity of the task but also the fragility for forging a unified path ahead. We welcome the follow-up that will occur early next year, and thank the AGD for the copy of the latest draft which was sent to ADRA in late September for our comments.

August 2006 was a time of reflection and feedback of the planning completed in February and a consolidation of ADRA's position in relation to its day-to day activities. A decision was made to back up of ADRA's existing files on a separate hard drive and to keep it in a safe place (ie both at ACDC and with an Executive member). A new telephone line was acquired via a mobile phone held by an executive member, and enquiries were made about the on going viability of a permanent venue for ADRA. Web-site issues were also discussed.

ADRA is grateful to Evan Wills for the work he did to ensure that ADRA's web site was operating successfully by April 2006. It is only through the spirit of those like Evan who willingly give their time with almost no payment or funding that organizations such as ADRA can maintain a viable presence. We thank Evan for his continued support and continued upgrading of our system. Evan hosted a training day for ADRA Executive members in August 2006, and methodically took each one present through the system, making us familiar with the versatile features of the system which all ADRA members can now access (www.adra.net.au).

It is now possible to place newsletters and other information from and links to other ADR organizations around Australia on our website. For example ADRA has offered its support to WADRA in hosting the next National Conference in Perth and is prepared to place on its web-site any information considered pertinent in collaboration with WADRA.

In relation to the issue of finding a 'home' for ADRA as discussed in August, we are very grateful to ACDC who have very graciously kept our files, sent out our emails offered us a venue for meetings, but most importantly have maintained our links with our members during finalizing our web site throughout 2006.

We sincerely thank Peter Robinson the immediate past Chief Executive of ACDC for his generosity and wish him the best in his new endeavors. We also warmly welcome Cynthia Leonard the new Chief Executive of ACDC and look forward to a continued fruitful liaison with ACDC. Many thanks also to Nerida Cook from ACDC who sent our emails over the year and we wish her well for the future. We also thank Paula Castile for providing us with a meeting room for much of 2006.

In September ADRA held a seminar on Collaborative Law by Robert and Lorraine Lopich. This seminar was inspirational and a further session has been organized for 2007 following a trip by Robert and Lorraine to the United States in

October 2006 where the latest information about collaborative law will be brought back and shared with us.

On Thursday 9 November we are holding a seminar by Tania Sourdin which similarly promises to be inspirational and we hope to see many of our members there not only for the value of Tania's talk but also as a pre Xmas get together.

Finally we come to the AGM, 30 October 2006, after our regular monthly meeting held on 9 October where the details of the AGM and the dinner subsidized by ADRA for its members were finalized amongst other issues.

One such other issue was the latest declaration by the National Mediation Conference on its web-page that membership to the various committees had been finalized. It was noted that ADRA did not have a place on any such committee and enquiries to that effect were made to various members on the National Mediation Conference Board, having stated our interest to become a member in various Committees as early as in May 2006.

The gist of the response was that organizations as such were not represented on the National Mediation Conference Committees and LEADR was cited as an example of such an organization. It was concluded that only interested individuals would be considered for membership and that these individuals may simultaneously represent one or more organizations. That being the case three of our executive members placed a bid for consideration on the National Mediation Conference Committees again, but this time as individuals as per the suggestion of the consulted Committee member. We still await the outcome but have requested a time-frame for a response which will hopefully be forthcoming by the end of the year.

That concludes the year's events and brings us to this evening. I know that tonight we will have a very exciting presentation by Steven Freeland whose reputation in International Law precedes him. Steven's expertise in dealing with issues on an international level is much sought after as a dispute resolution skill in itself. I look forward to his talk later tonight.

I have enjoyed my Presidency with ADRA and look forward to another term when we can finalize the many projects set in motion this year. I also look forward to the on-going collaboration with other ADR groups during this interesting period of ADR's history and, in particular, Mediation's history. Thanks again to the Executive members for their excellent contributions this year. ADRA is indeed very alive and well.

Katherine Johnson

**Statement of Revenue and Expenditure
for year ended 30 September 2006**

2005		2006
	REVENUE	
1670	Conferences and functions	1130.00
6475	Membership and subscriptions	4855.00
11	Interest	154.96
8156		6139.96
	EXPENDITURE	
-	Audit fees	198.00
15	Bank charges and State taxes	53.90
1567	Conferences and functions expenses	1200.20
54	Depreciation	49.00
-	Electricity	-
-	Insurance	-
-	Publications - newsletters/brochures	-
416	Postage	241.00
74	Printing and stationery	87.35
1930	Rent	
122	Sundry expenses	50.00
361	Telephone	245.90
695	Internet/web	239.40
-	Wages and consultancy fees	-
1260	Storage	-
35	Office removal fees	80.00
6529		2444.75
	Loss/profit	
	Net operating (Loss)	
1627	Net operating profit	3695.21
9661	Retained profits - beginning of year	11288.00
11288	Accumulated surplus at 30 September	14983.82

Notes:

Membership \$4915 less returned cheque for \$60.

Seminars \$700 + \$\$170 + \$260. Cheque for \$20 not yet banked, not included in accounts.

Balance Sheet for year ended 30 September 2006

2005		2006
	Current assets	
3000	Cash at bank	7077.09
7799	Cash management account/Term deposit	7966.00
10799		15043.09
	Fixed assets	
489	Plant and equipment	430.00
11288	Total assets	15473.09
	Current liabilities	
-	Creditors	320.00
11288	Net assets/accumulated funds (surplus)	15153.09