



MINUTES

**FLAGS AUSTRALIA AGM 2015
and 28TH NATIONAL MEETING**

THE BARN, 3C AVENUE ROAD MOSMAN NSW 2089

Tuesday, 3 November 2015

Secretary/Public Officer Ralph Bartlett opened the meeting at 6.20pm.

PRESENT

R. Bartlett, M. Blakeney, A Burton, E. Crump, P. Delprat, J. Dixon,
R. Kelly, G. Naughton, P. Markwick, J. Vaughan, J. Dixon

PROXIES

S. Anderson (FOAN), A. Brown, A. Chapman, P. Haylen,
M. Iacuone, E. Kwan, B. Luxford, C. Randall, R. Strachan, S. van Raalte.

MINUTES AGM 2014

Confirmed

DECLARATION OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE Unchanged.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2015

This past year has seen intense focus and activity for the Society's Executive , preparing and hosting the 26th International Congress of Vexillology in Sydney 8 weeks ago.

I am delighted with the result and thank all the Society's NSW Members who, despite valid reservations at the time, voted in early 2009 to accept the invitation of FIAV to apply to host ICV 26.

By all methods of evaluation the Society hosted an enjoyable, informative and entertaining Congress, with 100 participants from 25 countries, from every continent and delivering 33 varied and interesting Lectures. We also provided four varied, but especially tailored, excursions for Delegates' Companions, the Observatory Hill Flags Event, the day excursion to Canberra and the Closing Dinner.

The overall success is a credit to the co-operative and conscientious work of all members of the ICV 26 Organising Committee, and no less, all the Society members who volunteered during the Congress to assist with various tasks, under the stewardship of Ralph and Suzanne Kelly, who oversaw every aspect that developed over the six years' preparation, and more intensely the 6 months prior to the Congress.

I do want to say a specific thank you to all of our financial Sponsors – particularly Telstra Australia, the Hunter Valley Coal Report, Pennant Advisory, Vexventures, Ozdesijn Grafix, and to all of our flag industry and related supporters and donors – all listed in the Program:

to Suzanne Kelly, who organised and oversaw the Companions' Program, the Welcoming Reception and Closing Dinner,

to Elizabeth Kelly-Ong who designed the Congress Program,

to Gerald Naughton who organised and oversaw the Canberra Excursion,

to Tony Burton – who organised and oversaw the Lecture Program and will be preparing the Congress Proceedings for publication during the next two years,

to John Vaughan for hosting the Observatory Hill flag display and for including the Congress as part of ANFA's annual Australian National Flag Day ceremony in Martin Place,

to Jonathan Dixon for writing and posting a review of each Congress Day's activities on the Flags of the World (FOTW) mailing list, enabling the world's vexillological community to read about the Congress in progress with all its flavour and colourful activities;

to the NSW State Library for hosting in its Amaze Gallery a display of colonial NSW flag items.

Congratulations are also due to Tony Burton, Gerald Naughton and Ron Strachan, who together with other international vexos, were honoured as members of FIAV Fellows of the Federation – a recognition well-merited.

Besides attending ICV 26, many of our international participants took the opportunity to tour different parts of Australia. As part of this Elizabeth and I had the pleasure of hosting about ten of the visitors to Melbourne, before and after the Congress, with three visits to Ballarat to see the original Eureka Flag, and in Melbourne, the retired Regimental Banners at the Shrine of Remembrance and the Royal Exhibition Buildings, site of the first raising of the Australia National Ensign in September 1901.

Since the Congress, I have received only positive feedback from not only participants, but other vexos who have good reports second-hand, and now possibly regret not being able to attend. Comments included, “welcoming”, “a real success”, “enjoyable”, “privilege and honour to be your guest”, “inspiring”, “stunning”, “interesting and well organised Congress”.

What now for Flags Australia?

We continue to do what we have always done best: research and report in *Crux Australis* every aspect of Australian flag history and culture, balanced by cross-cultural; aspects of a world of flags, accurately, without fear or favour. We welcome new Members, and a new generation.

As a co-founder of our Society, it has always been an ambition for the Society to host more than one ICV in Australia. Thank you again to you all for making this second one possible.

VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT

As observed over recent years, paper correspondence continues to decline, while phone enquiries increase, prompted especially by the website. Most of these seek information or expect to buy flags direct from the Society. The latter requests are referred to the flag retail outlets listed on the website.

Even so, contact from electronic and print media here and from overseas occurred on several occasions during the year, especially in the context of flag design quests instigated by the governments of Fiji and New Zealand, these coinciding with the International Congress, addressed by representatives of the respective Design Selection Committees. Already some pundits wishfully predict that these off-shore ideas will soon wash ashore here. That is not guaranteed. A recent Australian political leader, oddly ignorant of what is actually on the national flag, made it clear that the current flag is not for furling. If circumstances change, the Society may expect heightened interest in membership.

TREASURER’S REPORT 2015

Copies of the Society’s financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2015 are tabled tonight together with a form that certifies that the statements give a “true and fair” view of the financial position of our incorporated association.

For year-end 30 June 2015, Flags Australia incurred a small deficit of \$1,654 on its operating activities compared to a small surplus of \$426 in 2014. Of the Total Income of \$4,541 received, \$4,150 was for new memberships and renewals plus \$127 interest. Renewals were lower than the previous year, due mostly to the payment of two year subscriptions by a number of international members in 2013-2014, while the lower interest amount is due to the timing of term deposit maturities.

Of Total Expenses at \$6,194, the largest, \$5,381, was for printing and postage of four issues of Crux Australis. Printing costs were the same as the previous year, but postage costs continue to increase. Society administration costs at \$814 were a little higher, due to fees payable to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

We have 62 Australian, and 26 overseas members, about the same as last year. At 30 June 2015 we had \$15,590 in the society's general cheque account and a term deposit, excluding funds set aside for ICV26.

The overall presentation of the Society's annual accounts is skewed by the receipt of almost \$32,000 in ICV registration fees. The funds from donations received were invested in term deposits and these earned an additional \$854 interest. Congress expenses of \$11,207 were incurred, mostly as booking deposits on various venues and excursions.

EDITOR'S REPORT – CRUX AUSTRALIS VOLUME 28

The four issues due in 2015 (Nos. 113-116) have been produced, the last printed this week. A feature of this year's covers, the Aboriginal dots forming the Southern Cross also represented thought bubbles as on the Congress flag, each edition inviting reflection on deeper aspects of vexillology. These touch on aspects of national identity, the difference between patriotism, prejudice and jingoism (also taken up in the edition coinciding with the centenary of Anzac), or the vagaries of flag design by popular competition and assessment by Committee: the Canadian experience in 1965 remains relevant to the processes unfolding in Fiji and New Zealand.

Topics covered flags of Australian and international interest - the Civil Aviation flag covered in detail for the first time - along with the flags of India and Sri Lanka, the flag history of Ogadeniya, flags in sport, banned in France, Nigeria and Tibet. The offensive ISIS flag used to sanction terrorism in Sydney a year ago and the backlash are also covered. An article on suffragette flags of the 19th and 20th centuries was especially well-received.

The final edition tabled here today flows from the 26th Congress, and in the case of the Confederate flag, discusses the theme awarded merit at the ICV of old flags endowed with new meaning.

Editing of 29/1 (No. 117 January-March 2016) is well advanced and will be based on the idea of whether or not flags still matter.

WEBMASTER'S REPORT 2015

The Society's website (www.flagsaustralia.com.au) continues to be a significant forum for Flags Australia sharing its interest in flags with the public. Increased traffic in each of January, February and March caused us to exceed our bandwidth limit and we were off-the air for the last day of each of these months. However the cost of a further increase in our permanent capacity to avoid such temporary peaks was considered too high.

The site now receives an average of 10,200 unique visitors per month, the same as the prior year, with a total of 200,000 pages accessed during 2015, a small increase. 54% of visitors come to our site from search engines such as Google, down from 67%, with the most frequent search terms being Australian flag and flags, and state flags, though our new flag page is one of the three most frequently visited pages.

Our site is in the first five names listed by Google for each of these terms, and for "New Australian Flag" and Australian Flag Retailer. A further increase in the number of other websites linking to our pages was observed, though a number of these show our flag images as a link, rather than reproducing the images and giving proper attribution.

We had visits from internet-users in 179 countries, a new record for us, the top 5 being Australia, USA, China, Russia and Great Britain.

The quality of our content each year leads to several requests to reproduce our content and artwork on other websites or in books. We received a request in October from a Scouting group to reproduce our page on the new flag debate. The website and the contact listing generates various media enquiries – particularly about the possible flag consequences of the proposal for a new flag for New Zealand. We also receive a number of enquiries to purchase flags, and these are referred to our trade members. The website continues to be the most visible presentation of the Society and our flag interests to the general public in Australia and internationally.

OFFICE HOLDERS 2016

The President, Ralph Bartlett and Committee member Colin Randall advised that they would not stand for re-election. The following positions were nominated and were deemed elected as no other nominations were received.

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|----------------------------|--|
| President | Ralph Kelly |
| Vice-President | Tony Burton |
| Secretary (Public Officer) | Ralph Bartlett |
| Treasurer | Ralph Kelly |
| Editor | Tony Burton |
| Webmaster | Ralph Kelly |
| Committee Members | Edwin Crump, Jonathan Dixon Bruce Luxford , Gerald Naughton |

Re-elected Treasurer, Ralph Kelly announced his intention to hand over these duties to Gerald Naughton at the 2016 AGM. The re-elected Editor agreed to start training an assistant or successor Editor, possibly Jonathan Dixon, to confer in the new year.

GENERAL BUSINESS



NATFLAG 28 **REPORT ON ICV 26 SYDNEY** **31 AUGUST- 4 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Well, we did it, and we did it well!

Since the Congress I have been asked “How was it?” The simple answer is “very successful”. Beyond that, I proudly recount how everything went according to plan with only the smallest of glitches and how all the participants had an enjoyable conference.

We set out to make IC26 a memorable event, bringing the world’s vexillologists to Sydney to share their interest and passion amongst their peers and with as many Australians as possible, who don’t normally have the opportunity to experience a flag conference.

Thanks to the high level of sponsorship support, we had very low conference fees, while a comprehensive listing of hotel and other accommodation options provided a wide range of price points, and the 20% decline of the Australian dollar against the US helped: those who came found the Sydney Congress no less affordable than previous ICVs.

An attractive Companions Program was developed to encourage couples to come to Australia as their annual holiday, and the record level of attendance of 28 companions attests the success of that strategy.

A huge amount of planning work was done by members of the ICV26 Committee. Tony Burton herded the cats – he had the task of cajoling participants to submit in timely manner their abstracts and then completed lectures and presentations, and then arranging them to form a coherent schedule over the conference week. Tony's work is not yet done – he still has the huge task of publishing the proceedings of the ICV.

The Canberra day-trip could not have occurred without the meticulous planning of Gerald Naughton, including bus hiring, catering for breakfast, morning and afternoon breaks, lunch and dinner, and arranging pick-up and drop-off points for participants located at some 20 different hotels, as well as co-ordinating the visits to the Australian War Memorial and Parliament House. Gerald also arranged the buses for Tuesday's Companions tour and visit to Observatory Hill and a picnic lunch.

Congress Treasurer Ralph Bartlett dealt with all the delegate registrations and remittance. His experience and practical advice as organiser of ICV13 and past Secretary-General of Congresses was invaluable.

Suzanne Kelly organised the three Companions' tours, all well received by the groups of up to 20 people. Suzanne also helped with the selection of venues.

A big part of the success of the Congress must be credited to the contributions during the week from all of our Sydney and Melbourne members. Whilst I assigned the specific task of Co-ordinator of the venue to Jonathan Dixon, I also asked each of you to be co-hosts of the event - making sure that none of our international visitors were uncomfortable, providing local knowledge on the venue and Sydney, doing specific tasks as they arose, whether asked or not. Your responses ensured the smooth running of each day and the friendly, welcoming behaviour that Australians are renowned for. We could not have run the event so smoothly or generated so much goodwill without all the arms and legs and willing participation of the active members of Flags Australia. Thank you.

The final financial result is a pleasant surprise. Despite qualms of cost over-runs or losses due to low numbers, the results are positive and very close to budget.

We set the budget in April 2014 and assumed for revenue and costing on having 100-110 participants. We achieved 100. Remarkably, we achieved total registration fees of \$36,100, 3% higher than budget. Sponsorships and donations were \$41,810. The total cost of hosting the events and excursions (including the deemed value of the venue) was \$67,812, a mere \$102 higher than budgeted. Other expenses were \$9,198. At this stage, we have a surplus of \$5,382, which will fund publication of the proceedings by CD.

The ICV has been a financial success. That so many elements are so close to the budget attests not only the quality of the budgeting but also the care taken in the selection of each venue and delivery method for each of the numerous activities of the Congress. We did not scrimp on costs, but were prudent in the selection of each service supplier, aimed at delivering a quality of experience at good value.

For me the highlight of the week was the relief on Sunday night when the international delegates arrived to collect their lanyards, the start of an exciting week, and the closing dinner, which was an excellent meal in an elegant room filled with happy delegates and companions. It was the end of a great week of lectures, tours and social events. Each of us will have their favourite memories from our week of flags, but I am confident that ICV26 in Sydney will be generally assessed by international vexillologists as one of the best flag congresses so far. I do hope that having experienced our Sydney event, more Australians will now go to the next ICV, in two years time.

Subsequent discussions touched on:

- Likely timing for the publication of ICV proceedings and the potential to publish them as a printed book
- Update on progress with the Fiji and New Zealand flag change proposals
- **Vexillogistics: An Illustrated and Practical Guide to Flag Design** was now available and provided to those who ordered at this meeting. Further details would be published on the Flags Australia website.
- Edwin Crump advised that he has commenced a Master of Public Policy and his thesis will include material on flag usage.
- Arrangements as known for the 27th International Congress in London in August 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.