

## **President Report 2020**

2020 has certainly been a hugely different year! We all know the challenges presented by COVID and the impact it has had on the Tourism industry and our members.

We are now starting to see some relaxation of restrictions and the opening of some borders and this will hopefully increase further in the lead up to Christmas.

What is now truly clear is that many of our roles as guides will be quite different.

We have just seen a statement from Federal Tourism Minister that International borders, with a couple of possible exceptions, will not be opened until at least late 2021.

Tourism Australia now have an extensive media campaign urging people to experience all the great things Australia has to offer.

We know that many operators and venues are working extremely hard to provide COVID safe experiences for Australian.

Members who are normally working in these markets will be ready to support the new world.

Those guides who rely on international guests will be particularly challenged. The future of the cruise ship industry is very uncertain.

Many of our members are experiencing particular challenges -whilst some have had access to financial support via Jobkeeper/Jobseeker and other subsidies, members are worried about their futures especially if suitable work opportunities are not readily available.

There will also be significant challenges for our Association in this new environment.

- Maintain and grow our membership base
- Increase member benefits and incentives
- Work closely with industry to support recovery and provide accredited guides.

We have recently increased our communication network with addition of many Associate guides from across the country.

This is again indicative of the need for guides to have a strong National voice.

This is the reasoning behind the proposal we will present at our AGM for a merger between PTGAA and Guiding Organisations of Australia.

I see this merger as the “vehicle” forward and strongly support the proposal. It is also an opportunity to reconnect with other guiding organisations, Government and Tourism authorities and review our current constitutions and regulatory requirements.

I am sure there are many positives and opportunities as we move forward.

Our committee will certainly need ongoing support from our members to achieve this.

We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated committee working to support us. Their contribution this year has been significant as we have adapted and looked at new ways to support members. You would have some sense of this from our communications and activities. You will also see this work reflected in the sub-committee reports presented at AGM.

I know that COVID and some personal situations has made the year very challenging for some committee members. This makes their contribution more valuable and appreciated. Thank you all for your generous support.

Unfortunately, we have three members who have decided to “step down” from the committee- our Secretary, Michelle Brown, Joy Vandoske and Annamaria Di Iorio. Their contributions over the past few years has been significant

- Michelle not only in her “statutory role” but also in her industry knowledge, networking and experience.
- Joy with her extensive links to and advise about the education section and assisting in Professional Development activities including our recent online program.
- Annamaria in 2019 and 2020 not only arranged a series of Professional Development activities for us but established many ongoing industry connections and member benefits.

I personally would like to thank Michelle, Joy and Annamaria for their support and friendship

Fortunately, Michelle, Joy and Annamaria have all indicated they will continue to support PTGAA wherever they can, so their knowledge and expertise is not lost!

I also need to acknowledge the work and support of Alex. You will all be aware of much of what Alex is doing for us and Alex is providing considerable administrative support to the committee in our various roles. Alex is working tirelessly “behind the scenes’ with continuous improvements/suggestions to our administration and we are already seeing some of these benefits.

Thank you to all our members for your continued support. We will need this support more than ever next year in should be the most exciting year in our history.

Jim McInerney

President, PTGAA

October 2020