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## Australian Sign and Graphics Association Presidents Report FY 2023

2023 was finally a year of trying to get back to normal operations and preparing again for the future instead of reacting to the present. The ASGA has been undergoing a renewal over the last few years on many fronts. Our back end and front-end software platforms have been changed over. We have been trying to put people and programs in place to keep the ASGA as the trusted partner you need and to increase our presence in all areas.

In 2023, a number of things happened. At the end of 2022/start of 2023, we rolled out a new software platform to keep track of our membership, run the back-end registration and billing for events and to handle our communications with our members. It also handles our invoices for membership. It's a big undertaking and there are always lots of things to iron out with something like this (sorry about billing you all early with an email that wasn't intended to go out), but the rewards are worth it in the long run. But really, this is a two year undertaking to get the platform running completely and integrated with other systems like our web page and our bookkeeping software.

We also change secretariat in the back end and Visual Connections took over the back-end secretariat for us along with our marketing duties. Changing secretariat and IT software at the same time is not something I recommend, but we have made it work.

On the marketing front, over the last four years, our profile in the general signage sector has grown immensely. We are more active at putting information out in formats that our members want to consume it and we are producing more content that the Signage Community wants to consume. Our following on social platforms has increased immensely. On a visual front, the quality of the information that we are putting out there has gotten much better and that is in part to our relationship with Visual Connections and also because new software platforms make it easier to do this.

On the events front, we had a full return to golf days this year. Long running events in WA, QLD, and NSW continued along with a second event in Melbourne. All events were a sell out and great fun was had by all. In 2022, we brought a Lawn bowls event to SA which was successful, so last year we have decided to roll the format out to other states. That has happened this year with our first event in Melbourne on today. The aim is to open up social days for people who aren't in to golf. The ASGA wants to create more days where the sign community comes together on a more regular basis. Early indications suggest that some states have accepted this more readily than others and we will look to build on these starts.

We continued with our webinars this year as they have been popular and we will be providing more in the coming year. Let us know if there are topics that you would like us to cover.

On the education front, the return of Visual Connections to the fold really supercharged what was possible here. In 2020, due to COVID, funding was cut to the platform delivered by AusSIP. In 2022, the ASGA returned some smaller funding and we took the opportunity to look at the format and take it to all of the states. We achieved this with the support of AusSIP who also took a leap of faith with us delivering the programs at a lower fee than cost

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recovery. But the return of Visual Connections and their ability to attract sponsors meant that the burden of funding this program was removed from the ASGA and the pool of funds increased by ten-fold. Visual Connections took over the front leading role on the program also and delivered it across Australia. It is a great outcome for our industry.

We also looked to create and or strengthen our links to Government. We made contact with many people in Federal Government and inside the working groups that drive the wheel. We are currently talking to the Industry Skills Councils. We have so far been unsuccessful in returning the Sign trade to the skill in need list due to the Construction Industry Skills council only newly being formed but we are talking to them now and hope to change that soon.

It's not sexy, but we also delivered a new constitution. A lot of work went into that and it is boring, but we are proud that we have finally delivered it.

We also changed our legal providers. After many years of loyal service to the ASGA, we parted ways with Warwick Ryan. Warwick has been brilliant for the ASGA and many of our members will have had contact with him at times of need. We thank Warwick for his great service over the years. In his place, we have added the Australian Business Lawyers and Advisors. They are providing phone support to our members on all things legal and will also be providing the legal documents and contracts in the future.

Looking to 2024. There are many things to look forward to.

It's and Awards year again. This time they will be run in Sydney as a stand-alone event. Normally they are run in conjunction with the trade show, but we have decided to run them away from the event so that they can be run on a Friday night rather than a mid-week slot. Entries will open soon, and we will be delighted to see all the wonderful projects that you all undertake.

We will be running more social events than we have ever been running with 4 golf days and 5 lawn bowls events. We hope you fully support them as the sign community really needs them and we are better when we come together.

There are 2 new initiatives that we are working on right now that will be delivered this year. We will have more details on them soon, but one is to do with Apprentices and another is to do with technical support to the industry.

We are looking to bring on a bunch of new legal documents on our web page soon too which will be a great resource for our members. We will also be updating our employment contracts for our members.

Yours Sincerely

**Mick Harrold**  
President