



PRESIDENTS REPORT *Maurie Rowe*

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM on 23 March was poorly attended with only 33 members present. They heard an interesting and informative address from Alison Ralph of Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre on Fire Ants. The financial report for 2010 showed that our Branch is in a sound financial position.

Committee 2011

Welcome to the two new members on the Committee for 2011, Timothy Smith and George O'Kane. Ken Harrison has taken over as Federal Councillor from Garnet Foley and John Hill has been elected as Vice President, Special Projects (Comsuper Pensions). Damian Jones joins Joe Johnston and Ken Railton who have stepped down from the Committee and I thank them for their long service to SCOA. I wrote to some 300 members in the Brisbane area in February asking them to consider joining the Branch Committee. The response was disappointing. Of those who replied, some had health or mobility issues and others had commitments with other volunteer organisations. These circumstances are all understood. The only acceptances were from Timothy Smith and George O'Kane and I thank them for volunteering. Unless there is a greater interest shown by members in assisting with the operation of our Branch Committee, it will need to close. Currently, our situation is critical with more than half of the Committee positions unfilled with NINE vacancies. We cannot continue to effectively function this way. Please see the article in this Bulletin and seriously consider joining the Committee or offering your services/skills in some other way.

NOW DUE - SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2011

Unfinancial Members

I recently wrote to over 100 members who have not paid their 2010 fees. It is important that members keep their fees up to date so that we can fund our Branch operations and importantly can pay the necessary capitation fees to Federal Office which are critical to the continuation of the various projects they are co-ordinating particularly fair indexation.

SCOA's Future

There will be a special item on the agenda for the August 2011 Federal Council meeting to discuss SCOA's future. This is a critically important topic at a time when our Association is experiencing declining membership, decreasing financial resources and an ageing membership. We will be submitting our views as part of a paper to be considered by the Council. It will be a follow up to the paper Queensland Branch presented to the October 2010 Federal Council meeting. If you have any suggestions on what SCOA should do regarding its future, we would like to hear from you. Just contact me or any Committee member and we would be pleased to consider your views. After all, this is your Association and its continued operation is in all our interests.

Kindred Organisations

I have had a couple of further meetings with the Queensland President of AIR and we are sharing and exchanging information which is of mutual benefit to both SCOA and AIR. My next meeting is scheduled for 5 July.

Absence

I will be overseas from 22 May until 30 June. Vice President Ken Harrison will be acting President during that period.

FLOOD VICTIM

A member in the Lockyer Valley sent in this letter to describe his experience in the January floods.

"I live on Murphy's Creek and following the flood, my wife and I were completely isolated. The creek was too dangerous to cross; after seven days I managed to get out to our front gate by climbing across a fallen tree; our road had been washed out and was impassable. None of the Authorities knew we were here for ten days. We got a vehicle out after twelve days. We were without power for three weeks and four days; phone lines were out and no mobile service. I am not complaining. We were prepared for such events, bushfires, floods etc so apart from the isolation and masses of debris we were OK; the water did not get into our house."

FOR YOUR DIARY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 29 September, 9.30am for 10am start

BCC Central Library, Community Room, Ground Floor

Guest Speaker – To be advised

Refreshments from 9.30am

Sandwiches will be served after the meeting

Membership fees can be paid before 10am commencement

One free SCOA membership for 2012

to be won as a lucky door prize

Agenda 10am start, President's report, Treasurer's report, Coffee Break, Guest Speaker, Questions, General Business

**SUPERANNUATED
COMMONWEALTH OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION
QUEENSLAND BRANCH
EXECUTIVE and COMMITTEE**

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Vacant

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Tim Thornton 4129 0609

Rockhampton -

Chelmer Roots 4992 1775

Sunshine Coast -

Robyn Graham 5494 2557

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**FAIR COMSUPER
PENSION PROJECT**

At the recent Federal Council meeting, the Queensland Branch presented a proposal to consolidate all issues relating to Comsuper pensions. Federal Council has accepted our Branch proposal and will now commission a Working Group to review the issues and appoint a Project Manager. Queensland Branch has asked to be included on the Working Group.

Since the Federal Council meeting, the Queensland Branch has proposed a comprehensive Issues list and Action plan to assist the working party to consolidate all issues relating to Comsuper pensions. The Issues list covers six areas comprising Indexation, Taxation, Reversionary Benefits, Old Age Pension eligibility, CSHC and Comsuper pensions generally.

Further information will be provided to members in future Newsletters.

John Hill

**MEMBERSHIP
DETAILS**

When corresponding with SCOA, would you please always include your name and membership number. Without this, it makes the Secretary's job more difficult and may result in your payment of fees not being correctly recorded.

For this Bulletin, the status of your membership fees has been omitted from the address label. This is because over the past couple of months there have been delays in processing payments of fees due to the absences of our Secretary and Treasurer on holidays. We didn't want to risk publishing incorrect details.

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HAVE A LAUGH

A Londoner parks his brand new Porsche in front of the office to show it off to his colleagues. As he is getting out of the car, a truck comes speeding along too close to the kerb and takes off the car door before zooming off. More than a little distraught, the Londoner grabs his mobile phone and calls the Police. Five minutes later the Police arrive. Before the Policeman has a chance to ask any questions, the man starts screaming hysterically: "My Porsche, my beautiful silver Porsche is ruined. No matter how long it's at the panel beaters it will simply never be the same again!" After the man finally finishes his rant, the Policeman shakes his head in disgust. "I can't believe how materialistic you Londoners are," he says. "You are so focused on your possessions that you never notice anything else in your life." "How can you say such a thing at a time like this?" sobs the Porsche owner. The Policeman replies, "Didn't you realise that your right arm was torn off when the truck hit you?" The Londoner looks down in horror. "Hell!" he screams. "Where's my Rolex?"

CPI News March Quarter

The All Groups CPI

Rose 1.6% in the March quarter 2011, compared with a rise of 0.4% in the December quarter 2010. Rose 3.3% through the year to the March quarter 2011, compared with a rise of 2.7% through the year to the December quarter 2010.

Overview of CPI movements

The most significant price rises this quarter were for automotive fuel (+8.8%), vegetables (+16.0%), deposit and loan facilities (+4.6%), fruit (+14.5%) and pharmaceuticals (+12.5%).

The most significant offsetting price falls were for furniture (-6.2%), audio, visual and computing equipment (-7.2%), milk (-6.2%), overseas holiday travel and accommodation (-1.6%) and motor vehicles (-0.5%).

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR REPORT.

When I joined the SCOA Queensland Branch Committee I did not realise that I would be able to wear so many different guernseys. Last Bulletin, I was wearing one called Indexation and this time I am in that for the Federal Councillor. The latest Federal Council meeting was held in Canberra from 29 to 31 March 2011. I had never attended previously so it was a new experience for me and I found it to be very interesting.

The paper submitted by the Queensland Branch received unanimous support so there will be a change in strategy developed and Indexation will not be pursued in isolation. The paper was named "Fair ComSuper Pension Strategies" and showed that it is not only in the area of Indexation that ComSuper pensioners are being unfairly treated when compared with other superannuants. There are anomalies in both the Taxation and Age Pension systems and these will be pursued in tandem with our Indexation claim. Reversionary Benefits too, at a time of rapidly rising prices for necessary services, is in need of review.

A Working Group is to be formed to develop this new strategy and John Hill, who had no trouble fitting into my Indexation guernsey, has prepared an excellent Action Plan which will be submitted for consideration by the Working Group. The final strategy will be decided at the next Federal Council meeting in August by which time we hope that our friends in the armed services will have seen their Bill seeking fair Indexation pass favourably through the Australian Parliament. SCOA's Indexation Manager, John Coleman, has been assisting the Defence Force Welfare Association in the presentation of their case.

Although there was a long discussion around the subject of the unfair treatment of ComSuper pensioners, the Federal Council meeting did discuss other weighty issues. One of these was Membership. SCOA, in common with most Seniors groups with the possible exception of Probus, is experiencing a decline in membership. This is a serious problem and if it continues will, in due course, affect the viability of our organisation.

SCOA is different to other Seniors organisations in that it represents the interests of one particular segment of the community – retired Commonwealth Public Service pensioners. If SCOA were to go under, that group would lose its voice. Can I implore each and every one of you to make that little extra effort and try to recruit new members. If each one of us was able to recruit just one new member from among our ex work colleagues it would ensure that SCOA had a bright future and a stronger voice.

Membership decline brings with it financial concerns. The Treasurer, in his report, highlighted the need for the Council and Branches to investigate methods of increasing revenue and reducing costs as those issues will have to be addressed if membership decline accelerates. A Member Survey is to be conducted. This will not be an irksome task. In Supertime you will be asked to respond to four or five questions. These questions are designed to inform Federal Council of the needs and expectations of our members. Questions will appear in the next few issues of Supertime.

Capitation fees will increase by \$1 per member and \$2 per couple in 2012. These are the fees your Branch pays to fund Federal Office operations. There was a recommendation that membership fees be increased by \$1 per member and \$2 per couple in 2010. Your Branch Committee will consider this and have it included on the agenda for the 29 September General Meeting. The website is to be upgraded and updates to its contents will be done monthly to keep it more current. The items mentioned above are those of most interest to our members. As is the case with meetings of this type there were a lot of housekeeping issues and various presentations. An interesting few days.

Ken Harrison

Members are welcome

to attend Branch Executive Committee as an observer. Meetings are held at CPSU rooms, South Brisbane on the first Tuesday of each month unless otherwise noted.

June 7, July 5, August 2
Contact Qld Branch Secretary
Joan O'Connor
(phone 3863 1055)
email scoa.qld@scoa.asn.au
to confirm venue details

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Wanted – Members to fill the NINE vacancies on the Branch Committee.

Why join – To serve your fellow members; to make a difference to SCOA's effort in improving benefits for members; to experience the satisfaction of helping others.

What's needed - A desire to help others; email facilities on your computer.

What's involved – About two hours of your time monthly to attend Committee meetings; if you can't attend some meetings due to family commitments, holidays etc that is OK; with email facilities you can always be in contact with what the Committee is doing.

What to do – If you want more information on the Committee's operations, please contact any Committee member; come along to a Committee meeting as a visitor to see what goes on; finally, please join the Committee; we need you and you will be most welcome.

HAVE YOU TOLD US?

We would like your date of birth and email (if applicable). Your date of birth will give us a better idea of the age demographics of our members and the email address will enable quicker communication.

If you haven't given this information, would you please provide it to the Secretary.

EMAIL DETAILS

SCOA is examining ways of making more use of emails for communicating with members.

This may involve the use of a third party provider in despatching emails. If you do not wish to have your email address passed onto such a provider would you please advise the Secretary.

COMSUPER

ComSuper administers Australian Government superannuation schemes including CSS, PSS, PSSap, MilitarySuper, DFRDF, DFRF, PNG and 1922 superannuation schemes.

Contact your scheme by writing to:

(your scheme name),
 PO Box 22, Belconnen, ACT 2616
 Or Ph: 1300 001 777 (local call fee).
 CSS members email: pensions@css.gov.au

More email addresses available.

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Branch Membership

DUE on and from JANUARY 1 2011

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Personal contact details please

Date of birth/...../.....

Phone - () _____

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NOTE -

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