

**Ag Institute
Western Australian Division
General Meeting**

**Wednesday 16 March 2016
Theatrette
Department of Agriculture and Food (WA)
3 Baron Hay Court, South Perth**

1:30 pm – 2:00 pm

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. President's Report
3. Election of 2016 Committee - President
 Secretary
 Committee members
4. General Business
5. Close of meeting

Western Australian Division Annual Meeting

Tuesday 17 March 2015

Auditorium, CSIRO Centre for Environment and Life Sciences, Floreat

1:40 pm – 2 pm

Minutes

1. **Present:** Bruce Robinson, Lyn Abbott, Natalie Moore, Don Burnside, Joe Steer, James Ridsdill-Smith.

Apologies: James Fisher, Jeff Russell, Mike Robertson, Peter Finlayson, Bob Hall, Paul McKenzie, Neil Turner, Dave Pethick, Laura Grubb.

2. **Welcome**

Lyn Abbott opened the meeting by making special mention of the Young Professionals in Agriculture Forum held prior, commenting that these events are a key component of what the Institute is about. Lyn also noted the quality of the presentations and acknowledged the support of the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, adding thanks to Joe Steer and other Committee members involved in the organisation of this event.

3. **President's Report**

Lyn Abbott spoke to a report that is attached at the back of these minutes, and a couple of small changes were made. Lyn made note of additional events that were being held this year, which will be part of the President's Report in 2016. Lyn made special mention, additional to the report, of the work of the National Treasurer, Don Burnside. She also added that the WA Division e-newsletter should be prepared every six months.

The (amended) President's report was moved by Don Burnside and seconded by Bruce Robinson; report received with acclamation.

Special acknowledgement was made by the attendees for the work undertaken by Lyn this year as President. Further acknowledgement was also made of the work of the Secretary, Natalie Moore. Both Lyn and Natalie were thanked for their contributions.

4. **Election of 2015 committee**

President: Lyn Abbott – elected unopposed

Secretary: Natalie Moore – elected unopposed

Committee members: Don Burnside, Jeff Russell, Mike Robertson, Peter Finlayson, Bruce Robinson, Joe Steer.

All members were elected by acclamation.

5. **General Business**

1. Bruce Robinson commented that a previous student member, Laura Grubb, should be joining our Committee as the student rep from Murdoch, in May 2015.
2. Bruce Robinson asked if student undergraduate members need to reapply every year; this should not be the case, but it will be followed up. Additional comment was made that in the past we have lost track of students when they graduate, and this is being looked into.
3. Don Burnside noted that a number of positions are vacant at Board level, and that he and Kelly Pearce are standing down this year. The Board is encouraging a diverse gender and age distribution for its membership.

6. **Close of meeting:** meeting closed at 2 pm.

W.A. Division Ag Institute Australia (AIA) 2014/15 Annual Meeting President's Report

First, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding support and initiatives taken by members of the WA Committee during the last year: Bruce Robinson (Immediate Past President), Natalie Moore (Secretary/Treasurer), Don Burnside, Michael Robertson, Peter Finlayson, Jeff Russell, Joseph Steer, James Fisher and our student members, Sophie Hooper, Alana Martin, Amy Corsini and Jayson Schreurs.

During 2014, the WA Division was proud to congratulate Dr James Fisher who was awarded a Fellowship of the Ag Institute, and Christine Zaicou-Kunesch and Dr Bob French who were recipients of the WA Division 2014 Awards of Excellence.

The WA Committee met monthly by teleconference throughout 2014 and the following events have been held:

2014 Young Professionals in Agriculture Forum

This event was held at CSIRO Floreat on 26 March 2014. The event was hosted by the AIA WA Division and sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA). It showcased outstanding work of agriculture students who were selected to present their final year research projects based on a written report submitted to AIA. Kimberley Adams (UWA) was the WA Winner this year, and Nikki Dumbrell (UWA) and Georgia Pugh (UWA) were second and third respectively. Liam Ryan (UWA) received the award for the Best Presentation. Networking and discussions about the presentations occurred over a light morning tea, a great opportunity for interactions between the students and professionals in this field. The event was well attended by students from CY O'Connor Institute (Muresk) and Curtin University as well as AIA members and guests. (Reported by Alana Martin)

2014 Careers Night

This event was held on 27 May 2014. It was a great opportunity for students to prepare for the workforce. Students from UWA, Curtin University, Murdoch University and CY O'Connor Muresk had a chance to learn about careers in the agricultural sector from industry representatives. Hosted by the AIA WA Division, representatives from 16 prospective employers and students were welcomed to the UWA Undercroft for this lively event. Using a 'speed dating' format, small groups of students were able to interact with staff from each prospective employer for eight minutes before being rotated onto the next. The organisations were able to explain what they do, and provide advice on employment opportunities to the students. Following the 'speed dating' session, students and prospective employers networked over pizza. This event was valuable to students, showcasing the wide range of opportunities available for those interested in pursuing careers in agriculture and related areas. It was organized by James Fisher, Lyn Abbott and student representatives from Murdoch University, Curtin University, CY O'Connor Muresk and UWA. Sponsorship from Wellard, Rabobank, Landmark, AgLime of Australia and UWA for this event was greatly appreciated. Industry representatives who attended the Careers Night worked extremely hard during the 'speed dating' sessions. Everyone was most grateful that they repeated their explanations to multiple groups of students, which was quite an exhausting process for the industry representatives. More than 100 students rotated around the teams of industry representatives during the evening. (Reported by Alana Martin)

2014 Regional activities - Kojonup Tour

This event was an initiative based on the WA Division's strategic plan to improve services to regional members, and to enhance its profile in rural areas, AIA's WA Division conducted a Spring Tour in the state's south-west in July 2014. The Tour was coordinated by Bruce Robinson and centred on the rich farming area around Kojonup. The Tour program commenced with a light lunch on Friday in Kojonup, and comprised visits to diverse local agricultural enterprises, before concluding mid Saturday afternoon. The visits included an export sheep-meat abattoir, a pork fattening operation, a highly productive mixed farm, an innovative Merino stud and two entrepreneurial horticultural success stories: a tulip bulb producer and an everlasting daisy enterprise. The highlight of the program was the convivial Friday night dinner to which the hosts and partners of the daytime visits were invited as AIA guests to share their innovation experiences. The PR generated by this part of the program was clearly worth the organisational input. The challenge now is to increase the participation rate at the next regional event. Despite the low attendance, this event provides a model for AIA WA's regional events in the future. (Reported by Peter Finlayson)

2014 Regional Activities - Southern Network

This network is an initiative of WA Committee member Peter Finlayson in the region from Albany, Manjimup to Bunbury for members of the Ag Institute. Peter has communicated with members and sought their interest in local discussion. He has also suggested using Webinars to provide regional members with access to presentations and discussions on topics of interest. This was based on the South Australian Division's trial of Webinars in 2014 and it will be trialled in WA during 2015.

2014 Celebration Sundowner

At this event, Dr James Fisher FAIA and Professor Mick Poole FAIA AM were acknowledged for their contributions

in the field of agriculture at a Celebration Sundowner on Monday 3 November at CSIRO. James was awarded a Fellowship of the Institute in May 2014, while Mick Poole became a Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia in the 2014 New Year's Honours List. A relaxed and collegial atmosphere of 25 colleagues and friends of James and Mick heard them discuss their varied careers and highlights of the industry. James outlined his diverse career in agriculture up until now, at mid-career, where he is keen to give back to the industry particularly through his current role teaching at the School of Agribusiness at CY O'Connor Muresk. He highlighted the importance of personal relationships including mentors and colleagues. Whilst outlining potential new technologies of the future, he noted that the students of today will be ones implementing such technology and he is happy to help them achieve this. Mick discussed the key highlights of agriculture over the past 40 years outlining his extensive knowledge and involvement in various milestones. Forever the scientist, Mick also outlined a number of areas where further research could yield significant benefits to agriculture. He noted that research organisations should (as CSIRO has done) give their scientists room to think 'blue-sky', acknowledging that it is a valuable leadership quality that more should adopt. (Reported by Natalie Moore)

2014 Affiliated Societies Meeting

The Annual WA Professional Societies Agriculture Workshop initiated by AIA WA Division was held on Wednesday 10 December 2014. A roundtable presentation of activities and events from each society / organisation was followed by a discussion of potential collaboration in 2015. Opportunities for collaborative events included a Compendium of our organisations, combined city and/or country events, and a postgraduate "Young Professionals in Agriculture"- style forum. (Reported by Natalie Moore)

Planning for the **Innovation in Agriculture: Opportunities and Constraints Forum 2015** commenced during 2014. The Committee is planning a one day Forum in August 2015 as a biennial Forum for the WA Division following the highly successful *Busting the Productivity Barrier* Forum held in August 2013. The 2015 Forum will be take place on 19 August 2015 at the Pogoda, Como. The planning group for this Forum is Michael Roberson, Don Burnside, Peter Finlayson and Lyn Abbott. The Forum will address technology development and its uptake including innovations by producers, how science fosters innovation and the role of RDCs, and the constraints to innovation.

Initiatives at National level

Initiatives by the AIA Board include development of a revised accreditation scheme, revision of the AIA Strategic Plan and distribution of the AIA Weekly Alert (email news). David Hamilton, Chair of the Board of AIA will visit Perth in August 2015 to attend and present at the ***Innovation in Agriculture Forum***. David chairs monthly meetings of the **AIA Division & Events Committee** which includes representatives from each Division. The national AIA secretariat is now based in Sydney and is providing effective support for the Divisions as well as to the AIA Board. National Conferences will be held in Brisbane in May 2015 (20-21st). The title of the conference is ***Professionals Preparing for 2040 Agriculture***. The subsequent national conference will be held in Hobart in 2016.

The WA Division currently has 77 members. We welcome participation of student members and appreciate their support, especially in organizing the Careers Night. In 2015 the Careers Night will be held at the Perth Showgrounds. A Newsletter reporting on WA events was circulated to WA Members in December 2014.

I specifically acknowledge the enormous effort of our WA Member, Peter Finlayson, as editor of the Ag Institute's Agricultural Science Journal. Submissions to the Journal are sought by the end of March for the next edition.

Lynette Abbott
President
AIA WA Division
17th March, 2015