

## **Western Australian Division Annual Meeting**

**Wednesday 16 March 2015**

**Theatrette, Department of Agriculture and Food (WA), South Perth**

**1:30 pm – 1:50 pm**

### **Minutes**

1. **Present:** Lyn Abbott, Natalie Moore, Don Burnside, Joe Steer, Modika Perera.  
**Apologies:** James Fisher, Bruce Robinson, Kelly Pearce, Bruce Mullan, Sarita Bennett, Peter Finlayson.
2. **Welcome**  
Lyn Abbott opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
3. **President's Report**  
Lyn Abbott spoke to a report that is attached at the back of these minutes, which was moved by Don Burnside and seconded by Natalie Moore; report received with acclimation.
4. **Election of 2016 committee**  
President: Don Burnside – elected unopposed  
Secretary: Natalie Moore – elected unopposed  
Committee members: Lyn Abbott, James Fisher, Joe Steer. Other current committee members will be followed up and also Peter Hutton who expressed an interest in participating.  
All members nominated were moved by Lyn Abbott; seconded by Modika Perera and elected by acclimation.  
The attendees moved a voted of thanks to Lyn Abbott for her contribution as a Chair of the WA Division over the past two years, which was moved by Don Burnside and seconded by Joe Steer.  
Student Committee representation was discussed and Don Burnside will follow up a nominee from Curtin Uni (through Sarita Bennett or Sue Lowe), Lyn Abbott will follow up UWA and Murdoch, and James Fisher will be asked to follow up Muresk.
5. **General Business**
  1. Young Professionals in Agriculture: special note was made of the number of uni students attending the Forum and the coordinators of these students (James Fisher and Sue Lowe in particular) were thanked.  
Joe Steer and Natalie Moore were thanked for their efforts with the coordinating of the Forum.  
Both finalists are comfortable with their papers being published in the AgInstitute's Agricultural Science Journal.  
Lyn Abbott noted that there is potential for the WA Young Professionals in Agriculture winner to be awarded a Medal, named after a significant person in WA agriculture, similar to what occurs in other States/Divisions. This is to be explored further.  
There was no further general business.
6. **Close of meeting:** meeting closed at 1:50 pm.

**W.A. Division Ag Institute Australia (AIA)  
2015/16 Annual Meeting  
Chair's Report**

I gratefully acknowledge the significant contribution of the Committee of the WA Division of AIA during the past year. This is a committee of active participants and everyone has taken on responsibilities during the past year. In addition to collaboration on the WA committee, Natalie Moore has continued to provide outstanding support in her role as Secretary/Treasurer, Don Burnside completed his term on the AIA Board and always made valuable inputs to the WA committee even while sailing in the Great Barrier Reef, Michael Robertson led the team who organised the highly successful 2015 Forum, Peter Finlayson's completed his term as editor of the Journal last year and in addition made a significant contribution to preparations for the 2015 Forum, Jeff Russell provided valuable links to DAFWA, Joseph Steer coordinated the Young Professionals in Agriculture Forum, James Fisher coordinated the Careers Night for agriculture students, and Bruce Robinson assisted with planning for the 2016 Spring Tour. In addition to these specific contributions, everyone contributed to the committee's planning and decision-making at monthly teleconferences.

During 2015, the WA Division presented their 2014 Awards of Excellence to Christine Zaicou-Kunesch and Dr Bob French. The 2015 Awards were announced in December and will be presented to Caroline Peek and Steve Curtin later this year.

The following events have been held:

**2015 Young Professionals in Agriculture Forum**

This event was held at CSIRO, Floreat on 17th March 2015. Benita Moir was placed first for her research on the use of supplementary feed in a grazed wheat crop; Joshua Barton was awarded second place for his research on genetic selection for lean meat yield breeding values; Sheree Walters was awarded third place for her investigation of phosphorus application and long-term restoration of Jarrah forests. Claire Payne received the award for the best presentation. The Director General of the Department of Agriculture and Food, Rob Delane made the presentations to the winners, and again we are grateful for DAFWA supporting this event.

**2015 Careers Night**

About 110 students attended last AIA Careers Night, which was held at the Wilkinson Pavilion of the Royal Agricultural Society at the Showgrounds in Claremont in April 2015. This annual event is now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year. Industry representatives were from 4Farmers, AgLime of Australia, AgConnect/WA Farmers, ANZ, C.Y. O'Connor Institute, CBH Group, Commonwealth Bank, CSBP, Curtin University Centre for Disease Management, Elders, Eurofins Agresearch, GRDC, Grower Group Alliance, Kalyx, Landmark, Rabobank, and UWA Institute of Agriculture. Students participated in a "speed-dating" session, rotating around the industry representatives. After the discussions, pizza was enjoyed by everyone. It has been decided to continue to hold this event at the Royal Agricultural Society Showgrounds and to strengthen our collaboration with the RAS.

**2015 Forum – Innovation in Agriculture: Opportunities and Constraints**

This event was attended by 94 participants. Among them were 20 students and 20 members of AIA. Several participants joined AIA following the event. The sessions included (i) Technology development and its uptake, (ii) Innovations by producers, (iii) How science fosters innovation; the role of RDCs, and (iv) What are the constraints to innovation, and how serious? The Hon. Ken Baston, MHR, WA Minister for Agriculture and Food gave the opening address. Information from the Forum was included in the Journal thanks to the efforts of Peter Finlayson. We were grateful to our sponsors: CSIRO, Australian Mineral Fertilisers, GRDC, AEGIC, Grower Group Alliance, UWA Institute of Agriculture and Aginnovate. It has been decided to hold a major AIA Forum every two years in WA. We were pleased to welcome the President of AIA, David Hamilton, to WA to attend and give a presentation at the Forum.

**2015 Regional Activities**

Peter Finlayson continued his discussions with members in the south west during the past year, investigating options for occasional meetings. It has been decided that we should explore the use of webinars instead, and this will be addressed in coming months.

### **2015 Affiliated Societies Meeting**

The WA Division of AIA hosts a Professional Societies Workshop for groups with affiliation with Agriculture each year. The 2015 workshop was held in December. Outcomes from the discussion are being reviewed for future action.

### **2016 Spring Field Tour**

The WA Division of AIA plans to hold a one-day Spring Field Tour in the Swan Valley during 2016. Details of the event will be notified shortly.

### **WA Division Newsletters**

Two newsletters (6 monthly) were distributed to members in WA during the last year as planned.

### **WA Division Natalie Moore Award**

The WA Division of AIA has initiated a new award called the Natalie Moore Award. This award recognises significant contributions made by student members of AIA in Western Australia. The award is named in recognition of the enormous contributions Natalie Moore has made to the AIA over many years, which started when she was a student at The University of Western Australia. Natalie has been a Director of AIA, President of the WA Branch (now Division), and has contributed as a significant committee member in WA for many years, currently in the role of Secretary. The inaugural awardee is Joseph Steer, in recognition of his outstanding contribution on the WA Division Committee and for organizing the WA Young Professionals in Agriculture Awards.

### **Initiatives at National level**

The AIA Board has continued with the development of a revised accreditation scheme, and this will commence implementation soon. Information will be distributed in the AIA Weekly Alerts.

The AIA AGM will be held in Adelaide in May 2016. There is a call for new Board members.

AIA is introducing a Work Experience Register and is keen to include organisations willing to host students during their studies. This is currently under discussion and volunteers are welcome.

It is now possible to advertise jobs or post a job opportunity on the AIA Website. Anyone interested can view the AIA Careers Page.

The Ag Institute Australia Membership Survey has been completed and the findings will be distributed in due course. Check the Weekly Alert for information.

The WA Division currently has 63 paid up members, slightly lower than in 2015. However, we actually have 7 more full members than in 2015, and the reason for the apparent decline is that the AIA office is now keeping better track of the student membership. Some past student members had been retained on the database.

The next AIA WA Division event is the 2016 Careers Night to be held at the Perth Showgrounds on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

Once again, I thank the WA committee for their important contributions and friendship during the year, and look forward to a productive year ahead.

Lynette Abbott  
Chair  
AIA WA Division