

## PRESIDENTS REPORT 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year concludes my 5<sup>th</sup> year as President of SSAA Sydney. Its been a long journey and the Branch continues to undergo changes for the better.

I truly believe that Sydney Branch is considered the premier SSAA Branch within Australia. I am always contacted by members from other Branches and States telling me that they wish their Branch was as proactive as Sydney. I've even had members from other Branches asking how to transfer into Sydney!

The main thing that I have learnt after all these years is that a conducive committee, that works together, who is able to debate the issues and then move on and get to work, is critical to the management of the Branch. I am thankful to say that we now have a committee where everyone pulls their weight and takes on projects and donates their time to run your Branch. It's important that people who want to join the committee realise that it is a position that requires work and input, it is not fair on everyone else to assume you can just attend a meeting and tell everyone else what to do and expect your colleagues to do all the ground work.

Over the course of the year, we have laid the foundation to develop a strategic plan that will revolve around growing our Branch to provide better opportunities for the Sydney members. The committee will be having several facilitated strategy sessions and then we will ask for input from the members to assist us in moving in the direction which our members want us too. It is important that when the time comes, as many members as possible take part in this.

**Advertising and proactive promotion** of our sport in the Sydney area remains a priority for the Branch. This past year we have continued with media campaigns including radio, billboards and bus wraps. These campaigns have been well received by our members and other external parties. We were even approached by another SSAA State asking us for copies of our marketing and advice around Billboard promotion. Hopefully it catches on and other Branches and States start to become more proactive.

We continue to look for better ways to utilise our **ranges** and provide more opportunities for our members. I am extremely please to note that I am flooded with positive response from members regarding Silverdale range and the good work that Andy Mallen and Luke Mumberson have done out there. Silverdale is now more inclusive for all our members and offers a variety of shooting experiences including Fly, Benchrest, Pistol, Big Game rifle and a Practical .22rf Match.

We are looking at ways to increase the patronage to all our ranges including ANZAC Range. Ideally, we would love to open the Headland every Sunday, although until the patronage picks up, we are unable to do it. I have spoken with SSAA CSD about running Military Rifle and Tactical and Sniper Matches there, and hopefully we will have an announcement shortly with a date for the first match. We have also been approached by the SSAA Lever Action about hosting the State titles next year at ANZAC and we hope to be able to do this as well. We continue to work well with our friends at the NSW Rifle Association and other Range users at ANZAC and we look forward to this continuing!

Increasing member participation through competitive shooting will be a focus moving forward and we are looking at getting regular competitions up and running at all our ranges.

We held another Volunteer Recognition Dinner to thank all our volunteers that give up their time to run our ranges and keep our Branch running. This event is getting bigger and better each year and from the feedback that I have received, the volunteers look forward to this event coming around each year. I hope that this tradition continues long after my term as President expires.

**Political advocacy** remains a high priority for us. We will however, continue to develop our own political capital and influence as other areas of the SSAA appear to be moving out of step with what the members want. This year I have met with many political representatives both in Canberra and Sydney from all sides of Parliament and we continue to push the Branches' position of working with anyone who will work with us.

**Internal politics** within the SSAA is always an issue and we will continue to represent our members interests to our State body. It is pleasing to note that some changes are happening with SSAA NSW with new, proactive people being elected to the NSW Board. Hopefully this will equate to SSAA Sydney getting better representation, after all some 60% of SSAA NSW members reside in Sydney Branch yet we only get 6 of the 104 available votes at SSAA NSW, so we are left to join smaller Branches in alliances to push our policies and agenda.

It was disappointing to note that we attempted to bring better democracy to the SSAA NSW elections by adding an agenda item to this years' NSW AGM whereby Board positions for the State would be open to election by the general membership. The smaller country Branches saw this as Sydney trying to stack SSAA NSW and voted it down. We will keep trying!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff of SSAA Sydney that work to ensure our members have a good experience at our ranges.

A special mention goes out to Matthew Geracitano our Executive Officer who has proven to be an extremely valuable resource for Sydney Branch. Matthew is a pleasure to work with and I look forward to working with him over the next year.

I would also like to thank the Sydney Branch Committee for their continued support and the effort that they put into running your Branch. Along with the committee our range managers Pam Reeves (Hornsby), Shakir Kebabie (ANZAC) put in a lot of effort to ensure our members have facilities to use.

To all our volunteers who give up their time in an often-thankless environment to open our ranges, conduct training and work on maintenance days and working bees, on behalf of SSAA Sydney I thank you for all you do. Without the efforts of so many dedicated people, we wouldn't be where we are today.

James Walsh  
President