

## **2020 Annual General Meeting Chairman's Address 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

Ladies and gentlemen, good morning and welcome to the nineteenth annual general meeting of the Association.

**The five items on the agenda for today's meeting are:**

- Chairman's Address;
- consideration of the Directors' and Financial report and the Independent Audit report for the period ended 30 June 2020;
- questions and comments on management & audit of the company;
- election/re-election of directors; and
- any other business.

In addressing members today, I would like to provide you with an overview of the Association's financial position, its strategic direction and the core activities of the Association over the 2020 financial year.

The **Priorities**, as agreed by the Board, for that year were:

- focusing on advocacy concerning IR and Capital markets issues and doing more in collaboration with other industry bodies to lobby regulators and Government.
- focusing on the development of an IR certification programme and introducing a Certified Investor Officer (CIRO) designation to further professionalise the investor relations industry, and
- enhancing our corporate calendar App to provide easy access to critical data and facilitate improved calendar planning.

I am pleased to inform you that AIRA achieved a net profit of approximately \$58,000 for the 2019/20 financial year a great achievement which was supported by the Australian Governments Job keeper program and Cash flow boost incentives.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

As at 30 June 2020 AIRA had 218 corporate, supporting and associate members. Membership had decreased from the previous financial year (233 members).

The 2020 financial year was the sixteenth full year of corporate membership and I am pleased to report a close to 93% membership retention rate for the financial year.

I am also pleased to say that for the FY21 year despite the financial hardship being experienced by some members we have retained 138 corporate members and attracted 11 new corporate members to the organization.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

A number of new initiatives have been implemented to support members throughout the year.

The initiatives were as follows:

- Launching the ESG Directory – to provide contact details of the key ESG contacts across the globe assisting companies to navigate the ESG landscape.
- Uniting the IR industry during the pandemic through the launch of an IR Support Package including:
  - Distribution of a Global IR News regulatory update
  - The Support IR package
  - The online IR Community

During the year AIRA has been involved in a number of major activities around the areas of:

- Advocacy;
- Continuing professional development program and formal education; and
- AIRA conferences and networking events and functions.

## **ADVOCACY**

AIRA's advocacy program throughout the period has largely focused on representing members on capital markets issues and technology issues to enhance IR as essential and provide unified voice for listed entities to the government, regulators, and other industry bodies.

AIRA focused on:

- representing members on technology issues including the CHES Replacement project, and separately on electronic statements and obtaining email addresses;
- keeping members abreast of listing rules and regulatory changes;
- ensuring that listed entities have a strong voice with government and regulators on changes to allow for virtual annual general meetings;
- reviewing and updating Best Practice Guidelines for listed entity participation in material events.

AIRA's CEO and the Board worked collaboratively with the Treasurer, the ASX and ASIC to ensure that listed entities had a voice in the debate on the above topics. AIRA continued to represent listed entities on disclosure-related and market-related issues across various industry working groups including the ASX and the Governance Institute.

## **AIRA'S CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

AIRA's Diploma of Investor Relations course continued to return a positive profit, with a total number of 86 students enrolling in the course across the financial period. As at 31<sup>st</sup> October, 51 participants, including 4 international students, successfully completed the Diploma course

online examination since November last year. Online Certificate of Investor Relations also continued to be profitable professional development offerings.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for virtual education has increased significantly. In support of this demand, AIRA ran the Environment, Social and Governance for Investor Relations course as a virtual course which was supported by 40 attendees.

## **AIRA CONFERENCES AND NETWORKING EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS**

In 2019/20, AIRA ran approximately 30 in-person events throughout the first half of the year including chapter lunches, large cap and mid cap dinners, senior IR dinners, lunch and learn events.

The Annual Conference was held in Melbourne in November 2019. The Conference and Annual Awards dinner were well attended. AIRA's mid-year event, the Half Day Symposium, was delivered via a new online format.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person events were cancelled for the April – June period. AIRA hosted a number of virtual events in the second half of the year to provide much needed guidance on managing the changing IR landscape including briefings on consensus and on the use of technology for virtual IR.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is the Board's intention to continue to grow the benefits and services AIRA offers to members and to represent members' view on issues that significantly impact our industry.

I would like to thank members for contributing to the Association's success over the past nineteen years and I would like to extend a special thank you to those members who served on committees and working groups during the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ian Matheson, AIRA CEO, for his continued professionalism and commitment to the Association and the AIRA team for their support during what has been a difficult period. Their contribution to the everyday operation of the organisation is vital.

I would like to thank my fellow Directors for the significant contribution they have made to the Association over the last 12 months. Having served as your Chair for the past two years, I believe that it is important to have a constant injection of talent and ideas to the Board, and I encourage members to contribute to the ongoing success of the Association.

I have had the privilege of serving on the Board for three years, two of which as Chair. As stated under the Constitution, while I will remain on the Board for my second term it is time for me to ensure succession for the Chair role. I am delighted to hand over to Sean O'Sullivan, whose commitment and endeavor on behalf of both his profession and the Association is outstanding and recognised by all.

I thank you for your attendance today and very much look forward to your continued support throughout 2020/21.

Kelly Hibbins  
**Chair**