



Chief Executive Officer's Report

At the conclusion of my first full twelve months in the job it is useful to reflect on a number of the changes we have undertaken.

The close management of our modest financial resources has been a major focus. This has resulted in the trimming of our operational costs by tens of thousands of dollars without in the least having any negative impact on our operations. Since my last report I have instituted a new IT management regime that has seen improved outcomes and much lower costs in the office. We have dropped a number of expenses and cut outlays where we have been unable to eliminate them. The result of this micro-management of our cash has meant that we have always operated with sufficient reserves to be able to continue to deliver the services required and satisfy our statutory obligations.

Our 2015 National Conference was a success on several levels, including financial, but more importantly from the perspective of our Members. The feedback was virtually universally positive regarding the event itself and in some of the allied areas that failed to deliver the standards we might have wished for, we have sought feedback, actively sought it, and acted on the results. The plan for our Conference this year is essentially to replicate all of the positives and to remedy those very few negatives. As things stand presently, three months out from the event the level of support and engagement is very encouraging.

Nowhere is this more evident than in regard to sponsor support and this has improved right across the board. The National Strategic Partnerships, so important in regard to our Seminar program, is at a healthy level and we have also enjoyed renewed interest from sponsors willing to step in on an individual basis and back state seminars. As an organisation we need to be fully aware of their vital contribution and be willing to partner with them in a manner that delivers tangible benefits.

I should point out the levels of support from sponsors is growing and feeding back into membership. I mention this because for many 'Not for Profit' organisations this is the biggest challenge: how do they maintain membership levels? For itSMF Australia this is of course an issue, but I am pleased to report that in fact Membership is at a healthy level and the natural rate of attrition is more than matched by an influx of new members – this is especially true of our 'Corporate' membership which continues to grow at a healthy rate.

The quarterly Seminars which are run in every state and territory are our greatest Member benefit. They are also a testament to the collective hard work and vision of the State Branches. By any standard the staging of well over 30 Seminars across the country is a remarkable achievement and while Head Office support for these is very important, the drive and determination of the volunteer groups in each of these jurisdictions is what makes them possible. This essentially 'local knowledge' approach also works to keep the Seminar program very relevant to the needs and developing interests of our Membership.

The Seminars itSMFA staged in Geelong were the first time we had successfully run these events in a regional centre. The success of these too provides something of a blueprint for how we might roll these smaller, more locally focused events out in other regionals in the country.

The active cooperation of the staff and the volunteer base of the itSMFA has of course been a vital component of our success. Direct communication can be less than straightforward given people's busy working lives, the sheer distances involved, including different time-zones and often very tight deadlines; not to mention the occasional 'curve-ball' thrown into the mix. The collective goodwill between State Branches and the National Office has formed the bedrock of our communications strategy – staff and Members appreciate that we're working to common ends and share a common vision and purpose.

My Board of Directors, the people you elected to manage your organisation, have been actively working with me to manage the Forum. I have enjoyed a close and productive relationship with them all, members of the Executive of course, but generally with the group. This is an important element in our success as obviously more progress will be made when everyone is working as a team and identifies with common goals. May I make the point that this has certainly been the case over these last twelve months and I fully expect it will be the case in future.

Our challenges include a number that are common to all NFP's like ours, as I have alluded to, but there are a few that we have that are less common. The work 'Disruption' is one we have been hearing a lot about and it affects our industry perhaps rather more than some. At the same time, it also provides an opportunity for us to grow and to enhance our stature within the IT community and the community at large.

I would like to sign off this short report by acknowledging the support and assistance of a few people who have made my job both easier and more enjoyable and among these are the three retiring Board members. Kathryn Heaton has worked closely with the office as she oversaw the bedding down of our new CRM. Her patience and level-headed manner was appreciated by everyone in the office and on our collective behalf may I voice a simple but sincere "Thank you." These sentiments are similarly extended to Nick Laggar who made a point of reaching out to me on a weekly basis for a chat which I always found fruitful and useful. Michael Billimoria brought to the table a level of financial insight that I made use of in my own day to day workings with our budget.

My team, Sheryl, Alison and Michelle have all worked hard on behalf of itSMFA, but also to make sure that I was always strongly supported. I have come to regard working with them as a privilege. I took over of course from Bruce Harvey and I must say that I have sought his assistance more often than I had thought I would and it has always been useful and pragmatic – like the gentleman himself.

And to the Members, may I offer a fond hope that we continue our successes and go on to bigger and better things in the future we are sharing.

Alan Hollensen

Chief Executive Officer