

AHC Presidents Report

October 2023

It is with pleasure I submit this annual report for consideration at the AHC AGM 26th October 2023.

We have made some significant gains over the last year having grown representation significantly and firming up membership across the associations. Through the associations I estimate we represent over 300 stakeholders across the nation.

Our organization is rapidly evolving, along with the hemp industry, the Australian hemp industry is on the cusp of monumental change and we need to be ready.

Some highlights of the year include:

- Establishment of a regular industry report reaching over 400 subscribers
- Consolidation of the state association's memberships
- Completion of the Best Management Practices Guide
- Establishment of the Agrifutures \$2.5M 5 year research investment.
- Many meetings with consultants sourcing information for various projects, usually for Agrifutures
- State Government legislative reviews for NSW, VIC and Tas
- Consultation with QLD premier's office.
- Contribution to Agrifutures Adelaide research workshop
- Presentation to NZ hemp Summit
- Presentation to the Global Hemp Summit – Melbourne University
- Facilitation of the AHC Fibre Forum at Deakin University, which has stimulated significant industry development and collaboration.
- Industry discovery road trip.

Being a volunteer organization, these activities have been carried out mostly at our own expense.

Some key developments to note over the year:

A consolidation of the hemp food sector, where a temporary oversupply of seed put some fiscal strain on the industry.

Establishment of a number of decorticators around the country, increase in fibre crop planting and a growing interest in industry investment, including the commissioning of Hexcore's processing facility in Victoria and development in hemp ginning potential in NSW.

It is unfortunate that the government had not recognized the need for a hemp CRC, a major opportunity missed, however there is still significant interest in research development throughout the nation that we can build on.

We have established the Food, Fibre, Fodder, Carbon and Agronomy Groups with extracts to follow, which involves around 100 contributors from throughout the industry. As these groups develop, we'll look to formalizing a reporting system to ensure the free flow of information and enhance engagement with authorities, association members and the community. I look forward to development of the business case for each group, to build our case for regulatory change at a federal level.

It's been a pleasure to work with the councillors and admin supporters, in particular Bernard and Kieren who provide invaluable assistance. I'd like to mention appreciation for Gail Stubber's service to the AHC and Bronwyn Blake for stepping up on behalf of WA. Of course there are many other dedicated hemp industry stakeholders who are making valuable contributions to the AHC and the Australian hemp industry, whom I acknowledge and thank.

Looking to the future, I can see the industry is poised to grow substantially and the AHC is well placed to help support the industry in these early days. With the possibility of the establishment of a national cooperative, the AHC can continue to bring the industry together in most facets to provide a united voice and create those opportunities to allow the Australian hemp industry to flourish.