

President's Report SW Branch RAJ 8th November, 2011 AGM

I have been honoured to be your President for the past 4 years, and I would like to thank you for your support of this role. Today, in line with our constitution, I will be standing down as President, and I wish the incoming President every success.

We are very fortunate to have such supportive Magistrates in the SW and I would like to thank Magistrates Kelvin Fisher, Michelle Pontifex and Vivien Edwards for all their assistance in providing such timely training to allow us to maintain such a high standard of court accreditation, they are always available to us, and I would encourage you to take advantage of their vast expertise.

We cover 11 courts throughout the South West, and I doubt the Justice system would survive if not for the good will of Justices. A special thank you must also go to the court staff who are also willing to assist us in the smooth running of the courts.

We have 294 Justices in the SW region. 84 of these Justices are court accredited, and 71 of these make themselves available for the court rosters. We also have 5 Justices who are on the inactive list, and 5 justices who have qualified for active court accredited extended status, 107 Justices are active administrative, with 29 in the active limited 70+ category, and 47 over 75+. We maintain a roster for four signing centres – Bunbury, Busselton, Dunsborough and Collie, and have 3 Visiting Justices who service the justice needs of the Regional Prison, of course there are also many Justices in their workplaces and homes who willingly fulfil the Justice role to the general community and the police.

This year there have been 4 court accredited DotAG training days – Busselton in February – with 41 Justices attending, Manjimup in May with 11 Justices, Harvey in September with 17 Justices attending, and Bunbury in October with 60 Justices. For 2012 there are also 4 court accreditation training days scheduled (for Busselton, Manjimup, Collie and Bunbury). Today's information day is expecting 80 Justices to attend. I would ask that you remain vigilant in your record keeping – maintaining a log book of your duties, so accurate figures can be provided to the department (in July and January) of the workload of Justices – we need to do this for several reasons – not the least of which is to justify our numbers, demonstrate the volume of and diversity of work we undertake, and ascertain a community need for the appointment of new Justices. There are many documents available for download on our website to assist you in the application of your duties as a Justice, and along with the journal of the RAJ and the newsletter from the SW Branch, keep us all informed of the latest changes and information to allow you to remain current and effective.

To the committee I would like to say thank you for the contribution you make to the Association, and particularly to the SW Branch. Tim Lee Steere (senior Vice President, State

Treasurer and Council Member and our RAJ representative) – thank you for being so willing to wear multiple hats! To Dave Saunders (Junior Vice President and Collie representative), Chris Mills (our able secretary), Pierina Frisina (our Treasurer), Kevin Coote (our Bunbury signing centre coordinator), and committee members – Monica Potter, David Rees, Trevor Slater, Rob Prestage, Terry Donaldson, Graham Edwards (our Busselton representative) and Shirley Carbone your willingness and enthusiasm in being involved in the SW Branch is certainly appreciated.

I have had the occasion to be the guest speaker at several groups this year, and the groups are always surprised to learn of the wonderful voluntary contribution made by Justices to the community, especially given the requirement for training and in many cases travel at the individual's expense. You should all be very proud in the knowledge that you are very good "community orientated citizens", responsible for making the place where we live a better and safer place to live in.

In the media, there have been occasions of late when Justices have been the target of negative publicity, we have asked that the RAJ council address this by counteracting the very rare error of judgement by a Justice, by highlighting all the good Justices are responsible for in the community, we are still waiting for a response from my letter to them in August, and are hopeful that a series of press releases from the Attorney General's Justice Department and the Royal Association of Justices will soon be forthcoming. The SW provides an excellent opportunity for positive publicity because of our court accreditation training status system, and the cooperative nature and trusted relationship we share between our Magistrates and Justices.

On Thursday 17th November you have to opportunity to show your support for the Choose Respect Campaign – the SW Branch have chosen to promote the "Choose respect" message through the display of posters in the court waiting areas, and the JP signing rooms, the campaign is now spreading throughout the community including many schools, community groups, and businesses. A "Rally 4 Respect" has been organized in Bunbury , to allow all these groups to come together and have a public display of support – commencing in Anzac Park (adjacent to the COB Library) at 4 p.m.

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to come to the AGM and information day, and I look forward to sharing many more information and training days and indeed AGMs with you.



Alison Companti J.P.

President South West Branch Royal Association of Justices