



ROSEWORTHY OLD COLLEGIANS ASSOCIATION INC

(ABN 67 136 400 891)



ROCA President's Report 2023-2024 Year

The past year was marked by a lot of positives and achievements for ROCA, interspersed with several instances of difficulties presented by the University of Adelaide's city-based administration.

As an independently incorporated and managed organisation that works closely with the University of Adelaide and its Roseworthy Campus, ROCA has always operated in an environment of mutual trust, good faith and integrity. This was put to the test by the University during the 2023/2024 year.

ROCA is extremely fortunate that it enjoyed an excellent relationship with the Roseworthy Campus based University management. Head of the School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences and Dean of Roseworthy Campus, Professor Rob Woodgate and Head of Roseworthy Residential College and Manager of Student Services, David Purdie both bend over backward to assist ROCA in every way possible. ROCA sincerely appreciated their unwavering support throughout the past year.

The worth of ROCA's 126 year history and the 141 year history of Roseworthy College itself came to the fore during the year.

One of ROCA's great benefits is its "*Corporate Memory*". With changes of ROCA personnel and those at Roseworthy and across the University of Adelaide over time, during the past year it proved beneficial to have people and an organisation such as ROCA who could put long-term context on decisions and values connected with the College/Campus.

Personally, my 46 years' experience as a member of the ROCA Committee and five terms as ROCA President proved beneficial when negotiating a few very difficult issues with the University of Adelaide administration.

During the year, ROCA Vice President Andrew Eastick's lengthy association with ROCA and high-level professional career involving community interaction proved invaluable as he led the lengthy process of developing a long-term strategy to ensure that ROCA continued to remain relevant for both members and the wider community.

ROCA and Roseworthy Campus were invited to mount displays of historic and archival items as part of South Australia's History Month, a true reflection of the respect in which both bodies are viewed by the general community.

While ROCA continued to develop its collection of archive memorabilia during the year, considerable effort was also put into researching and recording the stories behind the myriad of historic happenings and artifacts associated with Roseworthy Agricultural College.

ROCA offered a total of five valuable Student Prizes for the “*Dux or Gold Medallist*” graduating from each of the Veterinary and Animal Science courses offered at Roseworthy Campus. Support for these Prizes came via the “*Roseworthy Campus & Student Fund*” established by ROCA two decades ago. ROCA also provided the Prize for Roseworthy Residential College’s “*Old Students’ Cup*”, an award initiated by ROCA in the year 1900.

One of the contentious issues addressed by ROCA during the year in relation to the “*Roseworthy Campus & Student Fund*” was that despite being established and owned by ROCA, any donations received were channelled via the University of Adelaide system in a spirit of common good will to enable incoming funds to be considered as tax deductible for the donors.

However for reasons currently unknown to ROCA, at some stage the University of Adelaide took total control of the “*Roseworthy Campus & Student Fund*” and it became a University owned fund, with ROCA alienated.

During the year, ROCA discovered quite surprisingly that the University’s Adelaide based bureaucracy had now imposed a range of extremely draconian and restrictive rulings on how ROCA could access monies from the Fund in order to offer Student Prizes at Roseworthy. Several of the Student Prizes planned to be offered by ROCA have been delayed for over six months waiting for the University’s Adelaide bureaucracy to provide approvals.

In attempting to seek resolution to this issue, ROCA has been greatly assisted by the Roseworthy based University staff from the School of Animal & Veterinary Sciences and Roseworthy Residential College. Despite this, the overarching University Adelaide-based administrators’ delays prevail.

Attempting to negotiate a way forward on several issues with the University of Adelaide administration tended to take ROCA’s valuable time and focus away from core initiatives. When Roseworthy Agricultural College merged with the University of Adelaide in 1991, the University Alumni Office asked whether it could include ROCA’s member contact database within its own system, on the proviso that ROCA continued to own the information and have continued access to it.

However during the past year the University decided to deny ROCA access to its own member information, breaching the spirit of good faith and mutual co-operation that ROCA felt had existed. This presented enormous problems with the co-ordination of 2024 ROCA Reunion groups. After a lot of time and effort spent by ROCA negotiating at the highest level of University management, our Association has again regained access to its member contact information.

The upshot of all these interactions with the University of Adelaide however is a move by it to formally treat ROCA as an external body, although some of the previous support received by ROCA from the Alumni Office is expected to remain. Negotiations for this to occur will take place during the coming 2024/2025 ROCA year.

A summary of ROCA’s 2023/2024 year would not be complete unless the hard-working members of the ROCA Committee were acknowledged. ROCA has been fortunate to have a number of very professional and hard-working people on its Committee, providing the highest level of secretarial, administrative, financial and legal expertise for the benefit of all members.

Dale Manson
ROCA President 2023-2024

18th October 2024