

Roseworthy Old Collegians Association

President's Report

Friday 17 October 2025

It is with pleasure that I present the 2025 President's Report, a record of the activities of the Roseworthy Old Collegians Association over the past twelve months and a statement of the State of the Association.

I first want to deal with the recent change of the status of our Association in the University's Alumni Network structure.

The Alumni Network structure allows for Alumni Networks to operate as internal within the University or external to the University. Our Association had been an internal Alumni Network for many years but generally sat poorly within the structure. The contact details of our members were held by the University and were inaccessible to our Association, and our website was hosted by the University and important updates were not always able to occur in a timely manner.

In early 2025, whilst your Committee understood that by becoming an external Alumni Network our Association would be subject to additional costs, for insurance, and for the hosting and maintenance of the website, by mutual agreement our Association successfully transitioned to an external Alumni Network of the University.

The activities of our Association over the past twelve months have been a combination of looking back and looking forward.

Looking back in the sense of ensuring important parts of the institution's, and our Association's, history are accurately recognised and recorded, and looking forward, with the aim of overcoming the Association's two longstanding challenges that I have mentioned on a number of occasions, at last year's Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner, in the Digest, and in our Association's recently introduced eNewsletters – the challenges of Money and Members.

Dealing briefly with the looking back, items from past Roseworthy life that have been lost or moved from the Roseworthy Campus, and need to be recognised and recorded, include the Diploma in Dairying graduate board, the Ralph Baker Memorial Clock, the Gramp Hardy Smith Memorial Plaque and Prize, and the Professor Perkins Illuminated Address.

Your Committee is now taking the steps required to ensure these items are recognised and recorded at the Campus, steps that will culminate in a series of activities at the Campus on Saturday 17 October 2026, when also the Time Capsule interned by former College Principal, Dr Allan Callaghan, on Graduation Day, 23 February 1976, will be raised.

Before dealing with looking forward I am pleased to also indicate our Association has regained firm influence over the Roseworthy Campus and Student Fund it initiated in 2001. The Fund currently has capital more than \$205,000, enabling the allocation of up to \$10,000 each year for Campus Prizes, including the Old Students Cup and a Roseworthy Residential College Bursary.

Now to looking forward, Money and Members, and dealing first with Money.

The Target 100K Campaign, launched in early July with the aim of raising our Association's financial reserves over the next three years to at least \$100,000, is vitally important. Our Association must re-establish a level of capital that earns sufficient interest to fund the majority, if not all, of our Association's fixed annual costs, whilst also ensuring the value of the capital does not diminish over time. Those fixed costs include the production and distribution of the Digest and the recently introduced regular eNewsletters, the hosting and maintenance of our website, insurance, and the costs associated with Award of Merit.

The target amount for the first year of the three-year Campaign is close to being achieved, assisted by the generosity of several members. Please consider contribution to the Campaign if you haven't already done so.

Also to do with Money, the Association's Wine Offer, formally known as Plonky's Pick, made good annual profits in the early years of the initiative, but the current state of the wine industry and the multitude of wine offers now in the public domain has substantially diminished the profitability of the initiative in recent years. Your Committee has therefore decided to discontinue the Offer and the remaining stock will be available for purchase tonight at the Annual Dinner, by silent auction.

Now turning to Members.

Your Committee has recognised the need to increase the level of communication our Association has with its members.

Our Association currently has 2,200 members but has current email addresses for just 1,500 of those members. As our Association can only cost effectively communicate with members by email, one third of our members do not hear from us. With the assistance of members who are Facebook users, our Association's regular Facebook posts listing those 'lost' members' have in recent times located a number.

Your Committee recognised that to attract new members, in an environment where very few of the Roseworthy graduates of the past 30 years have joined our Association, the frequency of contact with current and potential members needed to be substantially increased. That is, being seen to have regular contact with members is important in encouraging prospective members to join, and especially current and future Campus graduates.

Your Committee has therefore introduced the aforementioned regular eNewsletters to supplement the twice-yearly Digests, introduced a members Facebook page and has significantly increased its level of Facebook posts.

In addition, with funding from the University's Alumni Funding Scheme, our Association has introduced four annual Lunch 'n Learn events at the Campus, the Digest is now being distributed to all students on the Campus, and your Association is now regularly posting on the Roseworthy Campus Facebook page.

Early this year your Association established regular communication with the Roseworthy Veterinary Alumni. One of a number of initiatives our Association is now engaged in with the Roseworthy Veterinary Alumni is the publication of a joint brochure to be distributed to all graduating students, indicating the Alumni Networks available to Campus graduates, our Association for all Roseworthy graduates, the Roseworthy Veterinary Alumni for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Bachelor of Sciences (Veterinary Bioscience) graduates, and the Science Alumni Network, also for all Roseworthy graduates.

I am also delighted to be able to indicate that the President of the Roseworthy Veterinary Alumni, Dr Christopher Smith, and his partner will be our guests at the Annual Dinner.

Thomas Elliot Yelland was the founder of our Association in 1898. Yelland graduated with a Roseworthy Diploma in Agriculture in 1891 at the age of 23, graduating with the then Angas Silver Medal for the student with the second highest aggregate marks in their final year exams.

Yelland was the Secretary and Treasurer of our Association throughout its formative years. In 1920, when the practice of the Principal of the College filling the President's position ceased Yelland, in recognition of his founding role, was elected as President of our Association. Yelland, who had a distinguished career in business and in local government, died in 1942. There is no reference to his passing in any Association records. Your Committee is in discussion with the University on the introduction of an annual T E Yelland Prize, for the most outstanding graduating student of the Roseworthy Campus taking in consideration their leadership, scholarship and contribution to Campus sport.

The T E Yelland Prize will achieve two things, overdue recognition of the founder of our Association, and reestablish a Prize at the Roseworthy Campus with the prestige of the former Gramp Hardy Smith Memorial Prize.

Earlier this year your Committee became aware that the University holds a significant amount of money that had been allocated for the writing of a History of Roseworthy, an initiative that was being planned in 2018 but ceased due to the twin challenges of Covid and the unexpected death of the preferred historian and writer, Rob Linn. Your

Committee has appointed a Sub-Committee to re-commence the initiative. The Sub-Committee is mindful of the approaching 150-year anniversary of the purchase of the property as an experimental farm in 1881 and its commencement as a teaching institution in 1883.

Later in this Annual General Meeting you will be asked to consider recommendations from your Committee that Peter Fairbrother, Richard Turnbull and Andrew Dennis be elected as Honorary Life Members of our Association. I encourage your acceptance of those recommendations.

I move the President's Report be adopted.