

# ROYAL A&P SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S NOTES



**Welcome to the September 2018 issue of my notes.**

*Approximate read time: 12 minutes*

## **The New Zealand Royal A&P Show**

I am looking forward with much eager anticipation to The NZ Royal A&P Show being hosted by the Hawkes Bay A&P. This is the premier event of the A&P Showing calendar, and Hawkes Bay have worked so hard over the last few years to rebuild this show.

It has been something of a challenge this year, particularly with *Mycoplasma bovis* and having livestock at the show. This is especially important for the finals of our Young Judges and Handlers competition to find our NZ representatives for 2019 in Perth.

As some wise person said, *"To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity."* It is for those reasons I would like to acknowledge the Hawkes Bay Executive and staff led by President Simon Collin and CEO Sally Jackson. It is great and positive team committed in their working relationships with the RAS Executive. It is reassuring our event is in such good hands.

## **Can Federated non-profit structures work?**

The Royal A&P Society is a Federation, and Federations are by nature more complex because of the requirements of shared governance, interests, responsibilities and control. One of the key features of a Federation is that it is not an organisation.

In Federated structures the autonomy of local or member organisations is preserved while providing a vehicle through which the partners can achieve their purpose and goals as a national movement, through collective action and collaboration. The autonomous organisations that form the Federation have little legal control over one another.

Whilst the structure of most non-profit Federations is connected via bylaws, policies and agreements, staff and Boards struggle with the management of the structure. Tension and stresses emerge as national, regional and local partners agree to a Federation model, but then those partners resist elements of it or question the value added of being part of it.

Can federated non-profit structures work? Are there distinct benefits to be gained by a federated structure? Federations have been described as *"...facing a seemingly never-ending challenge to reconcile internal issues around power, responsibility, and accountability. As a result, critical management decisions often take inordinate amounts of time, energy and resources. This reality contributes to the commonly held perception, that non-profit federations are less efficient and effective than organisations in the for-profit sector."* [Managing Multi-site Nonprofits] Because Federations have no authority, the decision process can be fraught with paralysis and lead to watered down compromises.

There is a clear benefit to becoming a Federation rather than remaining as separate autonomous organisations.

Partners in a Federation benefit from a more recognizable brand and credible reputation, a stronger voice in advocacy, economies of scale, technology, programs, services and revenue development, and greater impact and results.

Our current environment is marked by increased competition for donations and funds, more discerning and demanding donors and volunteers, which means federated non-profits have to work more effectively and efficiently. However in many instances Federation partners don't know where to start the search for solutions or how to frame the issues.

As a result, Federations may focus on the wrong problem. They become bogged down in 'How' they will do 'What' they do before coming to agreement about a shared vision, values, goals and roles.

Critical success factors must be present in order to be a strong and healthy Federation.

They are interdependent; one is not more important than the other. However they cascade down and build on one another – from a shared vision, values and direction to clearer definitions of relationships and processes and then to activities that strengthen all Federation partners. In a strong and healthy Federation, partners are clear about their shared vision.

That vision gives a compelling reason why all Federation partners are working together, which is used as a backdrop to make decisions and set priorities. The shared vision reflects the collective contribution of all the Federation partners.

It needs to be at the centre of any Federation decisions and processes.

### **Feel like the wheels are just spinning?**

These three steps can overcome any productivity hurdle. First, the entire team should identify what the true goal is for the project, and make sure everyone is focused on that goal. Second, determine if there is a true finite ending, even if you can't see yet what it is. Finally identify the various challenges standing in the way of achieving that ending and force yourselves to ignore anything that doesn't help you overcome those challenges.

It's easy to avoid the obvious distractions like unnecessary meetings and people who just like to hear themselves talk. But it's the innocuous distractions that can cause real damage to achieving the goal. They often seem small, and there can be an immediate satisfaction in dealing with them, but they inevitably turn into major time drains and take your focus away from where it needs to be.

### **Groups are often where creativity goes to die**

The faucet of ideas runs slower as the room gets more crowded. When we think about creativity, we often jump straight to brainstorming. It's the default for most teams, but eventually brainstorming backfires. There is evidence that groups generate fewer and worse ideas while brainstorming than when the very same people are working on their own. In a group:-

- We can't all talk at once, so somebody's ideas are not going to get heard
- Some suffer Evaluation Apprehension - the notion that you don't want to look stupid so you bite your tongue on some ideas, which are usually the most unconventional ones.
- There is a pull towards conformity when we jump on the bandwagon of what is popular in the room. We end up thinking together instead of independently.

There is a way to get the best of both worlds – referred to as **brain writing**. It works by letting people generate ideas individually, write them down, and submit them. If there is a risk the group might be nervous about ego issues or status hierarchies, collect them anonymously. Next, bring all the ideas together, and let the group evaluate which ones have promise.

It's about leveraging the power of the group for idea selection, where people are actually better collectively, but letting individuals be creative first.

## Demonstrating Economic worth

In these times of intense competition for funds, sponsorship, and support, it is increasingly important that we are able to demonstrate a value proposition – in other words tell a compelling story of our worth and contribution. An excellent example of the big information to impress is in the Report of The Size & Scope of the NZ Racing Industry 2016-17. Here are some examples:

- The NZ racing Industry was responsible for generating more than \$1.6 Billion in value-added contribution to the NZ economy
- 14,398 FTE jobs sustained by the industry
- 614,600 attendances recorded at thoroughbred, harness & greyhound race meetings
- 10,800 people volunteer their time and resources
- 6,612 breeders
- 25,381 owners
- 2,400 trainers
- NZ owners & trainers spent in excess of \$389Million preparing horses & greyhounds for racing
- There are 62 racing clubs and 64 tracks
- Over 400 community organisations or charities are assisted financially by racing clubs

Have a look at the full report

<https://nzracingboard.co.nz/sites/default/files/documents/NZ%20Racing%20Size%20and%20Scope%202018%20Full%20Report.pdf>

You cannot help but be impressed by the size and scope of this industry and its impact on so many aspects of economy and community.

We don't have to think too hard to realise that the Showing movement has a story of its own to tell. Every Show should have their own report which contributes to a District report which in turn contributes to 'The Big Picture'.

We tried once before but owner members just did not want to participate (then wonder why we can't get major sponsorship). We are going to have another try and will distribute a list of questions to help us get started.

Pictured is another example, the Dairy Industry telling key information in one of its many pull up promotional posters:

- 8,769 children visited a farm
- 16,000 lesson plans downloaded
- 96,153 people visited Rosie's World website
- 1,200 schools were visited to promote the Dairy NZ education programme



## Designing Better Shows

What is it that visitors to your show feel that will cause them to want to come again? An interesting question and an important one to ensure your show remains relevant not just generally but certainly in your community.

Cirque du Soleil is one of the best known and best loved entertainment brands in the world, but they nevertheless thought they had a broader branding problem. Although studies had shown they were the most differentiated brand in terms of uniqueness in North America, they wanted to know exactly what that difference was. The theory was the shows generate awe in a unique way.

They turned to science to test that, an interesting story in itself. Their ultimate aim was to develop lasting relationships with both existing and new fans that would inspire them to keep buying tickets.

Their research would be a bit much to expect of an A&P but nonetheless the road map for survival and beyond is knowing the audience and their expectations. Research is essential. For example, Have students from the local college come and do a survey at your show.

You want to know why visitors come to your show; where they come from; what do they particularly like to see; how long they come for; what would cause them to stay longer; would they recommend your show to others (why / why not); what is one thing you could do to make your show a more attractive event?

Charles Eames, best known for ground breaking contributions to architecture, furniture and industrial design, manufacturing and the photographic arts said, *"Develop a curiosity. Look at things as though for the first time...Always think of the next larger thing."*

### **Go Beef campaign**

Congratulations Virgin Australia. Not long after our National Airline decided to serve pretend meat on their flights, Virgin announced they were looking for Kiwi Farmers to provide premium beef for their NZ to Australia flights. They thought it was a great opportunity to showcase our sustainably raised beef. Smart thinking and marketing on their part giving truth to the adage 'Never let an opportunity pass you by.'

### **Equestrian Judges Seminars & Open Forums**

I attended the Judges Seminars run by Central and Northern/Mid Northern Districts. I was impressed by the quality of the discussions and the open debate about interpretation and application of the rules. There was a big range of judging experience in the room providing diverse opinion. The aim of course is to have uniform, consistent and quality judging no matter where the show might be.

This can only add value to the sport for competitors.

Judges have been asked for their aspirations so we can develop a plan to do what we can to help them achieve those aspirations. The Judging grade exams and process of assessment are also being reviewed building on excellent work done by the previous National Coordinators Kevin Cholmondeley-Smith and Nicky Hutchinson.

### **The Fantastical Thinking & Ideas of Youth**

Anxious about turning your organisation over to a new generation? Here are a couple of stories which should cause you to not think twice but get on with it.

In this start up all the board members are 12 or younger. Kidbox is an online kids clothing system, which is a very competitive market. And as that market heats up, Kidbox is arming itself to take on the competition by bringing kid's voices and points of view into almost every part of the business. Hence the Kid's Board of Directors.

It began with the kids board program last year. They hand pick 12 Board Members from a pool of hundreds of applicants based on each child's work helping his or her community. They *"want the children to have their finger prints all over the brand."* You can read the full story here -

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90209657/at-this-startup-all-the-board-members-are-12-or-younger>

The dual forces of climate change and population growth stands to make life in cities extremely stressed for future generations. So it stands to reason that young people – who will feel the effects of these trends throughout their lives – would be particularly invested in finding a solution.

So a group of six teens from five countries teamed up to design a building of the future, sensitive to both environmental needs and demand for housing. Their concept was recently selected as the winning design from a competition hosted by the New York Academy of Sciences and United Technologies Corporation. Read more about that story here –

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90209043/6-teens-designed-this-wacky-green-building-of-the-future>

Whilst both stories are interesting in their own right, my reason for referencing them is that they illustrate a managed and considered way of getting the buy in of the younger generation to help build and ensure your business is relevant in the future. Their opinion is important and their ability to help shape the future is unfettered by our boxed and conventional thinking.

## Capturing the curiosity of young children

Sue Higgins is Rural Women New Zealand's education spokesperson. She believes capturing the curiosity of young children is the key to filling gaps in the agricultural workforce. She would like to see education around farming made available to all children from a young age.

Sue believes that teaching the food story will engage them and let them know where food came from. "If every school 'adopted' a farmer, more students might consider farming as a career," says Sue.

Now that seems to me like a good opportunity for an A&P to hook up with their local branch of Rural Women and say, "That's we are trying to do too. What say we work together on it?"

## Australasian Young Handlers, Judges and Rural Ambassador

As you are reading this I will probably be at the Adelaide Royal Show for the Australasian championships with our youth team. The competitions are spread throughout a full week of the show.



Our Rural Ambassador from Franklin is Annaliese Goettler (pictured) who has been studying up on Ag issues/trends/talking points in both NZ and Australia. She will lead the team.

The team is Courtney Davies (Merino Fleece, Merino Sheep, Poultry & Dairy Judge). Courtney will be our Rural Ambassador next year in Perth. Emma Pollitt is the Beef Parader & Judge. Jennifer Thomas is the Dairy Parader, and Scott Maultsaid is the meat sheep judge. Emma, Courtney and Scott have represented us in previous competitions.

## RAS Strategy

The Executive have all but completed the work on a strategy for the organisation. We invited feedback over a period of 6 months, and held a workshop at conference. Thank you to all those who contributed, we appreciated your help in focusing the RAS for the Future.

We have worked to summarise all of that onto a one page graphic which identifies what we are going to do, what part of that will be the Districts responsibility. The action projects will be staged over the term of the Strategy. There will be explanatory notes with the one page summary.

## Closing

On Monday August 6<sup>th</sup>, Kevin Cholmondeley-Smith died.

He was something of an icon in the Equestrian world and certainly a major contributor to RAS Equestrian Showing. On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> his funeral Service was held in Henderson then later he was buried in Mangawhai, his home and where his parents are.

I had the privilege of delivering one of the two Eulogies. I quoted Mr Bruce Orr, a Past President of the RAS. He said of Kevin, "The movement owes him a huge debt of thanks for lifetime of involvement, passion and commitment. All of us who were fortunate enough to have enjoyed his companionship & wise counsel are very much the poorer with his passing."

I happened to be looking through some of the correspondence I had with Kevin over the years and came across an email from September 2015. Kevin had requested some notes from me for a newsletter. Following is what I wrote and I believe it expressed Kevin's hopes also -

Imagine, if every conversation was a positive and constructive interaction.

Imagine, if once a decision was made by the membership, everyone got behind that decision determined to see it succeed.

Imagine, if every member was intent on contributing what they could for the good of the movement.

Imagine, if the membership appreciated whatever contributions were made not matter how big or small.

Imagine, if every member made sure they were fully aware of the issues to be addressed and were able to contribute constructively to any debate.

Imagine, if we were overwhelmed with youth wanting to be part of our meetings because it was such a positive learning experience.

Imagine, if major sponsors felt compelled by our membership data to be involved.

Imagine, if every competitor/exhibitor was a member of our member organisations.

Imagine, if every competitor/exhibitor felt they had access to information about the organisation.

Imagine, if our movement was a model of collaboration.

Imagine, if our shows were running out of room because their shows were growing.

Imagine, if the member organisations believed this was all achievable and would work toward that end.

I look forward to seeing you at The New Zealand Royal A&P Show in Hastings.

*Geoff Smith*

President, Royal Agricultural Society NZ (RAS)

<http://www.ras.org.nz/>



Check out the RAS -Harcourts Referral - it means \$\$\$ for your Association –[www.ras.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RAS-Harcourts-Referral.pdf](http://www.ras.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RAS-Harcourts-Referral.pdf)