AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC ACCESS NETWORK ASSOCIATION INC

VRN A0026600C
ARBN 081 355 722
ABN 84 081 355 722

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

August 2009

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:
Marc Walters

The 2008/2009 period has, been a difficult time for APANA with all regions seeing a continual decrease in membership. Continued belt-tightening by regions has managed to reduce the monetary losses.

Regardless, APANA continues to be an organisation boasting an efficient structure with a core of dedicated executives and general members. The improved financial and network situations will allow us to maintain our existing services for the next few years.

As in recent years, there are a number of tasks that APANA must continue to work at in order to remain viable:

1. Improve financial stability and security
2. Ensure the relevance of the organisation's services and goals for existing and potential new members
3. Consolidate equipment, services, procedures and organisational knowledge to minimalise losses and reduce workload on existing technical and executive members
4. Increase membership levels

Marc Walters
President, APANA

SECRETARY'S REPORT:
Jeffrey Toll

Region	Members August 2009	Members August 2008	Change
SA	35	37	Down 2
Hunter	22	31	Down 9
Perth	13	15	Down 2
Sydney	10	12	Down 2
Melbourne	9	10	Down 1
Brisbane	8	14	Down 6
ACT	6	2	Up 4
ICR	5	8	Down 3
TOTAL	**108**	**129**	**Down 21**

It's been a relatively quiet year for APANA. As expected, there has been a loss of members due to the changing nature of Internet access and APANA's mainly outdated services do not cater for the present market.

Some points to highlight this year have been:

• Canberra reinstated as a region. Thanks to Edwin Gibbons who followed up several lost members that were either expired or not included in the official membership register for some reason. Canberra is now over the 5 members minimum requirement to form a region as per APANA rules.

• National Server has been relocated from Perth to Hunter region and has been extensively upgraded with newer hardware and the latest version of FreeBSD.

• A reduction in the number of ECN dialup ports. As less and less people use dial up to access the Internet we reduce the port numbers accordingly.

• A new APANA Hostmaster. Michael Judd who is based in London has taken over from long standing Hostmaster, Brian Havard. Many thanks to Brian for doing this job for several years and best of luck for Michael in the future with the new role.

• Establishment of the APANA blog **http://inbox.apana.org.au** This Wordpress powered blog is run from a virtual machine that is located in South Australia using SA APANA member machines. Many thanks to Steve Fraser of SA APANA for setting this up and now receives on average a pleasing 100 hits per day from all over the world. The blog serves as a useful exercise in using Wordpress and learning many interesting aspects of Internet publishing such as how search engines work and crawl websites, keywords, images and search engine optimization. In addition, the blog works well with SA APANA's continuing experimentation with virtual machines. APANA members are welcome to post material there.

Although the organisation of APANA would seem to be in a decline at this stage, it only takes one good idea to discover and implement a group of peoples unmet needs in the community. Quite simply, APANA's main feature in the past, has been providing Internet access, however much of the technology has changed which does not allow us to compete with commercial companies. But trends come and go, it's just a matter of identifying and riding the next wave of good ideas.

APANA still has useful and established infrastructure such as its incorporation as a non profit organisation, rules, hardware, claim to a range of IP addresses, email systems and database along with management such as regional coordinators and treasurer. All this is available to us when we find a new direction.

TREASURER'S REPORT:
Carolyn Baird

Over all the financial status of APANA continued to improve in the 08/09 financial year with the recorded surplus exceeding that of the previous financial year.

Unfortunately this upwards trend was not evident in all regions.   Perth was able to reduce its loss by reducing its expenditure on its ADSL connection but a further reduction in expenditure is required before its downwards trend can be reversed. Hunter lost the most members during the year but late payment of fees by remaining members was the major cause of its recorded deficit. While Brisbane's deficit was substantially due to having the second greatest loss of members (about half that of Hunter). ACT regained its status as a region with the renewal by past members and signup of new members to complete the requirement as specified in the 'Rules of APANA'. South Australia, Sydney and Melbourne all had a significantly financially successful year.

National APANA was also able to maintain a surplus by the cancellation of the credit card facility in December last year. The savings regained by this cancellation (in 6 months) and the cancellation of the bpay facility the previous year more than covered the deficits for the year for those regions solely reliant on National for their continued operation – namely Perth and Brisbane.

The migration from using the credit card facility to using online bank transfer, direct deposit or cheque went smoothly. Only one member requested 'time to pay' which was readily agreed to.

Otherwise it was a quiet year – no billing discrepancies to sort out or other contact with third-parties - just continued positive interactions with members. In all, a year in which I can truly say that I've enjoyed being Treasurer and one that bodes well for the financial future of APANA.

REGION REPORTS:

ACT:

No report

Brisbane:

No report

Hunter Region:
Helen Donaldson

2008/2009 has been a very quiet year for Hunter APANA. Over the course of the year, the region is down 9 members, having lost 10 members, but gaining 1. Fortunately, the majority of the 10 lost members were "APANA Only" members. As a result of member loss, we were able to cancel another dial-in line, thus cutting Hunter APANA's costs. Although we were dangerously below our set limits at the end of the financial year, overdue members paid their fees in the early days afterwards, thus bringing Hunter APANA back "into the black". At the moment, we are debating cutting another dial-in line, but nothing has been set into stone at this point as there are still two members that are likely to renew. As it stands, we are biding our time to see what happens before making any decisions on the matter.

The ongoing problems with the ADSL modem were creating concern, but with thanks to the generosity of South Australia's loan of a trial ADSL modem, these concerns are at this point of time, at worst, a non-issue. The regional co-ordinator and deputy co-ordinator have continued fixing computers for members, however activity in this regard has decreased in comparison to that in previous years. It is unclear at this point of time whether this is the result of declining membership or a raised awareness of ongoing computer maintenance procedures by Hunter APANA's members.

Hunter APANA has ended the year with 22 members, with finances at a stable level. Of Hunter's 22 members, only 4 use the dial-in lines, with one member using the ECN dial-in. One member uses UUCP, with six members using mail-news, two ethernet-connected members, two members that continue to take advantage of Hunter APANA's webhosting service, and six "APANA Only" members Hunter APANA's bottom line is constantly being monitored to ensure that it remains a viable region.

Perth Region:
Jeffrey Toll

Perth region continues with only a loss of two members for this year otherwise generally quiet. However some issues with the region are:

- Perth expenses need to be trimmed. Though we have done cost cutting in the past such as changing the main link with Amnet to a cheaper plan, we still need to cut costs further.
- Aging hardware. Odyssey's hard drives and main board have been replaced after indications of eminent failure at various stages. Although functioning well, I have suggested we host Odyssey as virtual machine on SA equipment, which they have kindly offered to do.

Odyssey still provides important email services to both Perth and Brisbane members, in addition it provides shell access and website for Perth APANA. Many thanks go to sys admin, Dean who continues to maintain Odyssey in working order for Perth and Brisbane members.

ICR:

No report.

Melbourne:

No report.

South Australia Region:
Steve Fraser

This has been a year of consolidation for SA. Our finances have improved significantly (mainly due to the relocation last year from Elizabeth House) and our equipment has been very stable. The discussed move of the hub from a members home to commercial premises has not happened, nor does there seem to be much inclination from members for this to happen.

We have plans to virtualise several of our machines, and this is proceeding slowly. The recently introduced blog server ("inbox") is a VM, as is the SA Technical Wiki. A new Vmware host server should enhance these machines performance, as well as provide some badly needed extra disk space for tierzero when it is virtualised.

We also plan to replace the firewall machine, as it is underpowered and occasionally fails due to lack of memory.

We also now have a Twitter presence.

Many of our systems and packages have been upgraded during the year, so many thanks to those responsible. We have also picked up new members, including web hosting, and this seems to be one area where membership growth can be achieved.

On behalf of the RC, thanks to all those members who have contributed during the year.

Sydney Region:

No report.