

Foundation for a Rabbit Free Australia Inc **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2004**

<p>CHAIRMAN Dr J Radcliffe Chairman</p>		<p>ADVISERS</p>
<p>TREASURER Mr W Morgan Committee member and volunteer</p>		<p>Mr G Mutze Senior Research Scientist Animal and Plant Control Commission</p>
<p>SECRETARY Mr R Downward Committee member</p>		<p>Mr N Newland Mr B Drew Immediate past chairman Immediate past treasurer</p>
<p>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</p>		<p>HONORARY POSITIONS</p>
<p>Ms F Bartholomaeus Executive Officer</p>		<p>Mr A Fuller Solicitor</p>
<p>Mr K Heinrich Committee member</p>		<p>Mr DG Bramwell Auditor</p>
<p>Ms S Starick Representing South Australian Farmers' Federation</p>		<p>CHAIRMAN – RFA NSW</p>
<p>Ms S Oldfield Committee member</p>		<p>Mr D Lord</p>

Chairman's Report

to the Annual General Meeting held at the Adelaide Zoological Gardens Monday 6th December 2004

I would like to welcome members and friends to the 12th Annual General Meeting of the Foundation. In 2004 we have been able to provide some financial support to three separate projects, and expect to support more research next year.

We provided two small research grants this year, administered through the Royal Zoological Society's scholarship scheme. One recipient was Josh Griffiths, a PhD student in the School of Earth and Environmental Science at the University of Adelaide. Josh is researching interactions between bilbies and rabbits at Venus Bay and Roxby Downs, and asked for assistance with his substantial travel costs.

Katherine Moseby of Roxby Downs also received a grant. Katherine has completed a project on the most effective means of rabbit control at Roxby Downs, and required assistance to produce extension material for landholders and to travel to a conference in New Zealand next year.

A further grant, matched dollar-for-dollar by S. Kidman & Co., went to Greg Mutze of the Animal and Plant Control Commission, allowing him to attend the World Lagomorph Conference in Portugal, and to visit an RHD laboratory in Italy.

We were delighted to be able to fill this year's newsletter with news of these projects directly supported by the Foundation. Many thanks go to the contributors.

The Foundation has maintained contact with the Rotary Club's Australian Campaign for Rabbit Eradication (ACRE) which has been restructured this year.

Both RFA and ACRE were once again involved with the annual Haigh's Easter Bilby Weekend in Rundle Mall. Readings of Kaye Kessing and Ali Garnett's Easter Bilby books were ably handled by the MCs, and of course the Easter Bilby himself put in an appearance. RFA committee members staffed our display. Attendance on Saturday was excellent, although windy weather on Sunday caused the bilby tent to be abandoned. Sandra Gibson from Haighs said that they were very happy with how the weekend turned out, and most appreciative of our contribution.

The Foundation recorded a surplus of \$11,887 this year, including an increased level of licensing fees from one of our major supporters, Haigh's Chocolates. The share portfolio has performed well, with both capital growth and an increase in dividends recorded.

The Foundation has now reached our target level of saving, allowing us to offer substantial support to rabbit research programmes. Specifics will be determined when the outcome of the proposal for a new Invasive Pest Animal CRC has been finalised. The Foundation has also been having discussions with Australian Wool Innovation Ltd about the possibility of the Foundation helping to initiate a major new rabbit research program.

Membership fees, donations and our licensing income from Haigh's all contribute to our ability to fund rabbit control research.

Committee members have again assisted with the activities of the Foundation this year, particularly during the Easter Bilby weekend. William Morgan, the past Executive Director and current Treasurer, has provided much assistance and expertise, and Barry Drew, the previous Treasurer, helped to draw up the financial documents.

Our redesigned website is finally up and running, courtesy of our website designer Ingrid Bird. Thanks to Ingrid, and the website committee of Kevin Heinrich, Fred Bartholomaeus and William Morgan. The new site is attractive and easy to navigate, with plenty of useful information and links, and more to follow. We are still refining the site, so any feedback is welcome.

In conclusion, 2004 has seen many areas receive good rains, allowing land managers to once again divert some attention to rabbit control. RFA has been working to take advantage of our healthier financial position, investigating the best ways to support rabbit research and influence rabbit control policy in Australia. We expect 2005 to be a better year for rabbit control in Australia.

Dr John Radcliffe
6th December 2004