

## ATHEIST FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2014

2014 was a busy year for the Atheist Foundation.

We organised a tour of Eastern Australia by Richard Dawkins who appeared before capacity audiences in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in November and December 2014.

We also devoted much energy during 2014 to organising tours in March and April this year for The Unholy Trinity and Robin Ince. The first of the Unholy Trinity events was held in Sydney on 13 March at the Seymour Centre. The audience reaction was sensational with a couple of standing ovations for these three funny and thoughtful speakers, Matt Dillahunty, AronRa and Seth Andrews.

We issued various media releases on topics of concern including:

1. The proposed federal government curriculum review, which was a thinly disguised attempt to put religion back in schools.
2. Against Adelaide Archbishop Phillip Wilson's feeble attempt to restrict freedom of speech by campaigning to have "Come Heckle Christ" banned from the Adelaide fringe festival
3. Against prayers in Federal Parliament.
4. In support of Joe Kelly, the principled Principal of Cranbourne South primary school who exposed the poor quality and obviously one sided and extremist views in Access Ministry resources forced on Schools by the Federal governments outrageous (and illegal) School chaplaincy programme.
5. Catholic Church responses to child sexual abuse.
6. Against the School chaplaincy programme (again!!)
7. The Vatican's refusal to disclose to Australian investigators its files on child sexual abuse in Australia.

Social media and forums experienced huge growth during the year. I take this opportunity to thank the committee members and volunteers who make these services possible and keep them ticking over.

If we weren't already aware of it, the huge volunteer work required to get the Dawkins tour and Unholy Trinity and Robin Ince events organised reminded the committee of the effort involved for a volunteer organisation to actually get stuff done. Of particular relevance here is the question of the next GAC. The Committee would love to put on another one, but we recognise the big demands on committee and volunteers to get it over the line. This will be a major focus for the next committee. Speaking personally, I am fully committed to putting on another GAC, provided we can secure the necessary funding for it. Whilst on this issue, I must again thank all those volunteers and committee members who made and are making the Dawkins, Robin Ince and Unholy Trinity Tours possible. Joel Kilgour, Kylie Sturgess, Sarah Bluett, Andrew Skegg, Julian Jordan, Tanya Smith, Mark Gilroy and Catherine Donaldson, plus many others who helped on the evening of events and in lots of other tasks.

Planning commenced in 2014 for our first Podcast prepared, organised written and spoken by Kylie Sturgess. Check it out at:

<http://tokenskeptic.org/2015/01/23/pilot-episode-of-the-atheistaus-podcast/>

Julian Jordan has reported on the Foundation's finances and will speak on the issue at the AGM. I will not cover areas he has dealt with, other than say that the Foundations financial position is sound and has enabled us to finance the tours referred to above and our other activities. However, an issue for future committees is to establish new sources of funding for the AFA. If we are only to rely on member subscriptions in the future for our income, we will not have enough funds to properly prosecute our agenda and raise our profile. We need donors and we need partnerships with people who share our views about the negative impact of religion on society.

I would like to thank the committee for the superb effort in managing the Foundation this year. Not only diligent and talented, but a really nice bunch of people. In particular I would like to thank Karen Joyce our long standing secretary and repository of 30 years of AFA history. Efficient, smart and sensible, Karen makes a huge and balanced contribution to our management.

Ok, just in case, I know there are others I haven't mentioned, I'd like to thank you too!!

Finally, a note of thanks to Geoffrey Beikoff an AFA member who donated \$5000 to the AFA on 2<sup>nd</sup> February this year. Geoffrey died on 10 February 2015. He was a long term member of the AFA and his contribution is greatly appreciated.

Hmmm, yes, think about it, consider a donation to the AFA if you believe we are doing a good job for Atheism.

Michael Boyd

17 March 2015