

OOFERS AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

July 2017

Edition No 1

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter which will be published from time to time to bring you up today with what is happening within our OOFER Australia circle and provide the opportunity for readers to make a contribution to providing news, events and personal items that would be of interest.



SOME OOFER HISTORY HOW WE BEGAN

For those of you who may not have been aware, a reunion luncheon of Old & current Oil Distributors was held in Melbourne in April of 2006. It was a wonderful success, attended by **distributors from the 1970's – 1990's era**. As you might imagine there was much reminiscing, many stories told – some exaggerated and probably some given a lot more colour than they probably deserved. There were people who had not met one

another for thirty years and in spite of the greying hair or no hair at all, many still looked the same as they did all those years ago. Or, that is what it seemed like by the end of the day. The beer and red wine flowed as it normally did at distributor functions and everyone had a wonderful time.

The 1970's to 1980's were particularly unique years for the (1500) or so petroleum distributors operating in Australia at that time. During that period **APADA** was born, Unions were running rampant, the (9) major oil companies were acting in concert with them, when Distributors stood up through **APADA** and took them on in the courts – and won. Also during that period, again through **APADA** – **OAMPS** insurance was born. They were indeed unique and wonderful times that created many friendships and colourful characters

Following the first reunion luncheon, a survey of those who attended was undertaken, when it was agreed that the reunions should continue. However, the opportunity should be taken to ensure that a wider number of distributors, **current and retired** and those who had or still have, a close relationship with the sector, should be given the opportunity to attend. As a result, seven more reunions have been held, the second in Surfers Paradise at Jupiter's, the third in Melbourne at the Crown Casino, the 4th being held in the Barossa Valley in South Australia, the 5th held in Townsville Qld, the 6th in Surfers Paradise in May of 2013 and the 7th in Melbourne in May 2015 and the 8th in Cairns in May 2017. A further survey of OOFERS was held when it was decided that our reunions should be held every two years.

The next REUNION will be in Melbourne in May 2019 at a venue to be advised.



CAIRNS REUNION

As you are all now aware, the Cairns Reunion held in May was a great success with fellowship enjoyed with gusto. We in fact on the Thursday evening drank the pub dry of beer.

At this reunion the opportunity was taken to launch the history book of APADA/ACAPMA and its people, (Out of the Grip), awards were presented and moves taken to strengthen our growing fellowship group to ensure its continued expansion and longevity. Therefore, the opportunity is taken through this newsletter to let you know of the outcomes.

OOFERS AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

The OOFERS Australia Council, which has as its membership those who have received the OOFERS Australia Award, met for the first time as a group, on the morning of the reunion luncheon.

At that meeting, it was resolved for OOFERS Australia to incorporate as a 'Not for Profit' Company. With such incorporation requiring us to formally appoint an executive and Board of Directors, which will consist of (7) in number.

Therefore the following executive were duly elected.

Chairman: Kevin Hughes was re-elected as Founding Chairman

Deputy Chairman: Benito Guzzardi was elected unopposed.

Secretary/Treasurer: Ross Lake was elected unopposed.

Honorary Auditors: Price Waterhouse Coopers – Adelaide.

In addition, the following were appointed to the Board of Directors until the next Annual General Meeting, when formal elections for all positions will be held.

Roy Cottrell: Port MacQuarie NSW

Don Kirk: Canberra ACT

Allan McWhirter: Perth WA.

Dean Pradal: Cairns Qld.

All of these positions have been accepted on a voluntary basis.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

It was resolved that an AGM would be held in a non-reunion year at a different location.

It being further resolved that the next AGM would be held in Sydney.

Postal ballots would be held for all positions, with those ballots being declared at the AGM.

In a reunion year, the AGM would be held on the morning of the reunion luncheon.

FREQUENCY OF REUNIONS

The meeting resolved that the OOFERS Reunions would continue to be held every two years.

It being also further resolved that the previous requirement of every second reunion to be held in Melbourne be dropped, although the next 2019 Reunion would be held in Melbourne.

The 2021 Reunion to be held in Brisbane.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

It was resolved that a membership fee of \$50 per annum be introduced, which would entitle all such financial members being able to vote at all Annual General Meetings and any other meetings called under the constitution.

An invitation for members to register under this basis would be forwarded to all known OOFERS shortly.

Application for membership to become an OOFER will be as it is now, open to all current and retired distributor/wholesalers, wives, family, distributor staff and those closely associated with the wholesale sector of the oil industry



OOFERS AUSTRALIA AWARD

The OOFERS Australia Award will continue to be managed by the OOFER Australia Council, with nominations for recipients being able to come from within or without the oil industry. The following is the general criteria for an award to be considered.

OOFERS AUSTRALIA AWARD HISTORIC VIEW

Since the end of the Second World War Australian Petroleum Wholesalers have played a significant role in the development of Regional Australia.

As Agents, as they were originally called, by the major oil companies of the time, delivered 44 gallon drums of fuel to rural communities, farmers, burgeoning townships and industry. They were, without probably knowing it themselves and certainly not recognised by the communities within which they lived, were key players in the opening up of rural areas as mechanisation leapt ahead in leaps and bounds.

Battling unsealed roads throughout rural Australia with mud and dust being part of their daily lives as they provided the fuel lifeblood that was necessary to permit communities to flourish.

The Agents were essentially the quintessential small business, made up of individual family units, who actively supported the communities in which they lived and serviced with their petroleum needs.

It was not until the 1960's that bulk fuels progressively replaced the 44 gallon drum. Bulk deliveries throughout rural areas became commonplace as the major oil companies went to war with themselves to see who could flood country areas with small farm storage tanks. It enabled Agents to deliver their fuels more efficiently and economically in their new bulk cross lorry steel tanks.

In the cities, major oil battling to capture market share, built service stations on almost every busy corner, saturating the market with 24,000 of them

During the sixties and seventies small drum agents merged into bulk distributors, with the nine major oil companies which existed at that time, consolidated their distributor networks, within a market that was rapidly maturing. Distributors, as they then became known, distributed the fuel from now less in number, but much larger and more profitable business units.

However, this shift in the dynamics of the wholesale sector of the oil industry required the major oil companies to employ larger numbers of bulk tanker drivers to deliver to their network of Distributors throughout regional Australia. These drivers became heavily unionised which developed in the seventies and eighties into excessive militancy, the unions progressively exercising their power over not only wages and conditions, but control over how, where, when and who should deliver fuel to oil company customers. The major oil companies, in their quest to maintain industrial peace, initially, largely acquiesced to the excessive demands of the unions until through the auspices of their newly formed association; The Australian Petroleum Agents & Distributors Association (APADA) the Distributors confronted the unions through court action. In their various confrontations APADA and its members, were the catalyst that broke the union's excessive power and forced the major oil companies to cease acquiescing to excessive union demands.

Major oil also had over the seventies & eighties Distributor Agreements that were in a number of aspects commercially unconscionable and included in particular, that they did not recognise Goodwill within a Distributor business and with a requirement for Distributors and Retailers being obliged to absorb the high cost impositions of their (major oil) refusal to 'temperature correct' fuels product pricing. It was through the negotiations of the APADA and its membership that these issues were resolved.

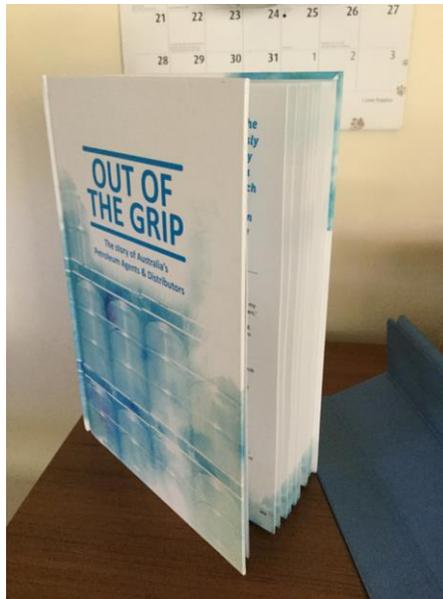
Distributors were also forced during the seventies to pay exorbitant insurance premiums for their truck fleets, which at that time had a generally favourable claims history compared to major oil. It was through APADA that the international insurer OAMPS was conceived which not only provided favourable and more competitive premiums for Distributors, but provided the opportunity for them to invest in what was to become under its stewardship, a highly successful international corporate enterprise.

APADA has since changed its name to the Australian Convenience and Petroleum Marketers Association (ACAPMA) and continues to provide invaluable services to its membership of Distributors/Agents who, through their changing role within the petroleum industry are now more appropriately recognised as petroleum ‘wholesalers’ who occupy a significant and prominent role within the ‘downstream’ sector of the petroleum industry in Australia.

It is from this group of petroleum wholesalers, who have done so much in the development of Australia and the industry in which they operate, that this **OOFERS Australia** Award is dedicated.

OOFERS Australia is an informal body, with members from all over Australia, with its membership being open to all past and present petroleum wholesalers/distributors/agents, their wives, partners, staff and those closely associated with the sector.

Further enquiries may be obtained from the OOFERS Australia Chairman



THE OOFERS AUSTRALIA PUBLICATION OF THE HISTORY APADA/ACAPMA

Writing the history of Australia’s wholesale sector of Australia’s downstream oil sector was conceived at the OOFERS Australia reunion in Melbourne in May 2015. The Australian Petroleum Agents & Distributors Association (APADA) now called Australian Convenience and Petroleum Marketers Association (ACAPMA) resolved that the history of the wholesale sector since the Second World War needed to be written now, before much of it was lost.

An Editorial Committee was formed consisting of the much loved and iconic figure Margaret Taylor who was an executive with APADA/ACAPMA for around 35 years, Ben Guzzardi served as a Victorian Distributor for around 35 years and our promoter of the ‘Benefactor’ program, Adjunct Professor Ross Lake OAM, who has a passion for local history. has served around 35 years in his Victorian Mildura Distributorship and

Kevin Hughes who acted as Chair of the Editorial Committee, has served for around 55 years working with petroleum distributors and resellers. This hard working committee were all assisted by a professional journalist John Kennedy. This small committee, working entirely voluntarily, laboured tirelessly and gave enormous amounts of their time over the two years to make the book a reality.

Publication costs were covered through the wonderful generosity and support of individual OOFERS via the book's 'Benefactor' program. Further contributions to the Benefactor program are still being received and will be acknowledged in any re-print (which is now highly likely) and within the Australian Petroleum Marketer News. (APMN)

The title of the book, '**Out of the Grip**' signifying the 'getting out of the grip of militant unions of the time and the struggle to achieve better contractual arrangements with major oil.

In essence, it is a history of APADA/ACAPMA and how it helped to protect and promote Distributors over the period. It is by its nature, a story of individuals, their trials, tribulations and achievements.

HOW TO PURCHASE A COPY OF 'OUT OF THE GRIP.'

The book/s may be purchased at around publication cost for \$50.00 plus \$10.00 postage from:

The Secretary/Treasurer

OOFERS Australia

Mr Ross Lake

P O Box 5034

MILDURA VIC 3500

Phone 0418 502 551

Email: ross.lake@tascopepetroleum.com.au

For Payment by Direct Bank Credit:

NAB Mildura

BSB: 083 764

A/c No: 64529 4413

**Our appreciation to Secretary/Treasurer Ross Lake
For undertaking the onerous and substantial task of
The books' distribution**



OLD OIL COMPANY INSIGNIA WORTH KEEPING

Anyone who has old oil company signage hidden away in their shed may be interested to know that it has substantial market value.

Victorian auctioneers Roycroft Auctions on Saturday 8 July offered for sale at Flowerdale over 550 signage lots most of which were the realisation of the estate of the late John Nichols who was a lifetime collector of old enamel signs and similar collectables.

Quite a number of the 550 lots had a petroleum connection being old oil company ones from the likes of like COR, Neptune, Atlantic and even early metal signage from the major fuel companies.

But while the total sale realised over \$250,000 plus a 13.75 % buyer's premium the fuel company signs were keenly sought.

An early Castrol Wakefield Motor Oil sign described as a 'bow tie design' and notwithstanding a few creases and chips in the metal sold as Lot 49 topping the sale at \$9,000 plus premium.

Another interesting sale was a bottle rack branded Kangaroo complete with a full set of oil bottles and their original pourers set another strong price selling for \$1,700 plus premium.

Auctioneer John Roycroft says demand for old enamel and metal signage is very strong a factor he attributes to "a man cave factor".

"Good quality historic signage is becoming increasingly harder to find and most blokes are buying them to hang in their shed.

"Many automotive related businesses also like to have early related signage to hang in their workshop or offices as well" he says.

JOHN KENNEDY

OOFER AUSTRALIA OBJECTIVES

Not unreasonably, many non-OOFERS have asked what we are all about, what is it that we do and what are our objectives. These are perfectly reasonable questions which may be answered by reviewing the undermentioned objectives within the Constitution currently being pulled together within our “not for profit’ corporate entity. Although, these objectives, as they always are, are in a state of evolution and will no doubt change over time.

OOFER Australia Objectives:

- a) **To provide opportunities for fellowship between the members.**
- b) **To create opportunities for the sharing of petroleum industry and general business information to the membership.**
- c) **To provide the opportunity for members to interact with one another for the benefit of each others’ business.**
- d) **To provide the opportunity to recognise members who have given ‘Exemplary and Meritorious Service to the Community in the Wholesale Sector of the Petroleum Industry in Australia’ the award to be called the “OOFERS Australia Award.”**
- e) **The OOFERS Australia Award to be managed under the auspices of an OOFERS Australia Council which membership shall be comprised of Members who have received the OOFERS Australia Award.**

YOUR CONTRIBUTION

We would appreciate any contribution OOFERS or others, may make to future issues of this newsletter. Letters, photos, information, OOFER member activities, people info’ and oil industry bits and pieces.

We also recommend that you pass on this newsletter to other prospective OOFERS or any other interested party

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There is no subscription fee.

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