

OCTOBER 2006 CONFERENCE REPORT

The Chairman of the Conference V W Bro J K G Oswald welcomed all present and explained the rules of the Conference for the brethren.

The Grand Master, M W Bro G L Bollenhagen made the following comments during his opening Address to the Delegates:

Brethren I add my welcome to you all to the 2006 October Conference, particularly those who have travelled considerable distances to attend and be part of the deliberations this afternoon.

Our October Conference provides the opportunity for the consideration by the representative from each Lodge of the proposals presented from the membership. We can sometimes assume that other Grand Lodges handle such matters in a similar or even a better method. Again this jurisdiction is a leader amongst the jurisdictions; as such an opportunity is not available in a number of other jurisdictions.

I congratulate the proposors for their willingness to raise the items in their name. It is far better that there be such an open and frank discussion, which clarifies the level of support or otherwise, from the general membership.

In turn the recommendations from the Conference and the views expressed during the debate will provide guidance to the Board of Management with its decisions.

Please take full advantage of the opportunity for discussion that is provided today.

The Chairman then presented two of the propositions for discussion and resolution:

Proposition 1:

That Grand Lodge supply a series of lapel pins to be presented to brethren on completion of each five years service (ie: a five year pin, a 10 year pin etc).

Proposed by Bro P R Rungie of Lodge Baden Powell No 222 and Seconded by W Bro D Porteous of Lodge Pythagoras No 96.
After some discussion the motion was lost.

Proposition 2:

That regulation 43.6 be amended by deleting the word "once" and replacing it with the word "twice."

Proposed by V W Bro A E Haines of The Lodge of Fortitude No 94 and Seconded by W Bro D Porteous of Lodge Pythagoras No 96.
The motion was put and carried.

Memorandum of Understanding

An Address by M W Bro R K Casson, Past Grand Master.

Thank you Grand Master for inviting me to present this address relating to the "Memorandum of Understanding".

I refer of course to the document, which spells out the means by which the major Orders of Freemasonry can move forward. The Craft, the Mark, and Royal Arch Masonry.

The document was developed in full consultation with the leadership of the major Orders and contains many facets put forward either by M W Bro Green or M E C Parsons. I am sure you are all aware of the stated support for the initiative that has been given by M W Bro Bollenhagen and M W Bro Beare.

A Memorandum of Understanding binds those who have signed the document to its content. The Memorandum of Understanding we are discussing today was signed by the leadership of each of the major Orders, Craft, Mark and Chapter, their Deputies and the Presidents of their respective Management Boards. It is reassuring that all leaders of the major Orders continue to support the endeavour.

Some years ago in the early 1990's a verbal agreement was reached that a Craft Master Mason would not be invited to join either of the two major Orders unless he had an understanding of the Craft, two years was the agreed time. Other Jurisdictions, both nationally and overseas have similar strategies in place.

A strategy was employed where the opinion of Freemasons was sought at Craft District Meetings. A show of hands on numerous occasions revealed a high percentage of members of both Mark and Royal Arch Masons attended Craft District Meetings. I believe that many in attendance today, are members of either or both Mark & Chapter. Concerns were frequently expressed at these District Meetings about the impact of newly made Master Masons being introduced to other Masonic Orders before they had an understanding of the basics of Freemasonry at Craft level.

The Heads of the major Orders, Craft, Mark and Royal Arch Chapter meet on regular occasions and it was agreed that the concerns expressed by our membership was acknowledged at leadership level. Negotiations commenced and after much discussion, legal advice, and input from our advisors the Memorandum of Understanding was created. During the development of the document the Duke of Leinster Lodge was consulted and they had a clear understanding what our goal was and gave support.

The document was accepted by the Boards of Mark and Chapter and tabled at the Craft Board of Management.

I quote in part:-

To support the Craft and for the benefit of all, the Mark or Chapter will:-

“Encourage all Master Masons to gain a basic understanding of Freemasonry in The Craft before furthering their Masonic education in other Orders of Freemasonry.

Not invite any Brother who has been a Master Mason for less than two years to apply for Advancement or Exaltation as a Mark Master Mason or Royal Arch Companion unless by virtue of the circumstances of the Brother he is, in the opinion of The Grand Master of The Mark or First Grand Principal of the Chapter, properly able to commit to active membership of both The Craft and The Mark/Chapter.

Not admit any Brother to membership of The Mark or Chapter in future or allow him to continue as a member of The Mark or Chapter unless he is a member of a Lodge under the jurisdiction of The Craft and retains such membership or he has retained membership of the Lodge in which he was initiated which holds a warrant from a recognised sister jurisdiction of The Craft provided that this will not affect current members of The Mark or Chapter”.

It is also acknowledged that the rapid advancement of Master Masons through the Offices of their Craft Lodges is also of concern and I remind brethren of the circular dated 29/4/06 which says in part:

“It is timely to remind Craft Freemasons of the undesirability of the rapid advancement of newly made Master Masons in the Officers Chairs of their Craft Lodges”.

Brethren are reminded of Regulation 40.2: - *“No Brother, without a dispensation from the Grand Master, will be eligible for election as Master unless, at the proposed time of Installation, he shall have been a Master Mason for a period of five years or longer”.*

Except in special circumstances it is considered appropriate that all Freemasons should be a member of a Constituent Craft Lodge of this Jurisdiction. We all pay our Grand Lodge dues to support our Association and it is believed that that responsibility should be shared by all.

Remember, the strategy is not retrospective and in appropriate cases the Grand Master, or Grand Principal can grant a dispensation.

I, and many others believe this Memorandum of Understanding will benefit the Craft, Mark and Chapter, and is a positive step forward for Freemasonry.

Allow me to refer to just a small, but important part of the Memorandum:

“The Craft shall practise no degree of Freemasonry but those of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason, and recognise no other degrees, save those of the Honourable Degree of Mark Master Mason, and the Supreme Order of The Holy Royal Arch (from our Constitution).

The Craft acknowledges that these are the five degrees of Pure Antient Masonry and that all Freemasons should receive the education of all five Degrees”.

(This does not mean we do not accept the existence of other Orders of Freemasonry. We attend each other's Festivals and many of us share membership).

The Memorandum further states:-

"The Mark and Chapter acknowledge that The Craft is the foundation of the whole Masonic structure and that all Mark Master Masons and Royal Arch Companions should give their loyalty and support to The Craft.

Encourage the linking of Mark Lodges and Chapters with appropriate Masonic Centres and Craft Lodges; Promote Mark Masonry and Royal Arch Masonry as an important part of the overall structure of Freemasonry and encourage all Master Masons to be members of The Mark or Chapter".

At the May 2006 Convocation of Royal Arch Masons, Regulations were approved that reflect the statements in The Memorandum and have resulted in the commencement of some positive initiatives. Tea Tree Gully Chapter has commenced a strategy of applying the principles of the Agreement. This Chapter is creating relationships with the Craft Lodges that share the same premises at Ridgehaven and introducing methods of strengthening the Chapter, retaining its existing Companions, and attracting new candidates. The Chairman of Membership of Royal Arch Masonry is kept informed on a regular basis of the endeavour and it is believed the process will become a model for all Chapters to use.

There is evidence of the recommendations within the Memorandum already working at Minnipa. Franklin Harbour Mark Lodge is now meeting in the Craft premises, bi-monthly, at Minnipa, the Mark Lodge meets in the morning and the Craft in the afternoon. Members of Franklin Harbour Mark Lodge are joining LeHunte Lodge and LeHunte Craft members are joining Franklin Harbour Mark Lodge.

I am at a loss to understand why there is some (small) opposition to the endeavour. I have asked why and I cannot glean an answer. The issue is not retrospective. The only Freemasons that will be affected in the future are those who wish to withdraw from this Grand Lodge and maintain their connection with other Orders. Knowledge of past happenings reveal that in almost every case a brother has withdrawn from this Craft Constitution because of conflict with either other Freemasons, or this Grand Lodge.

Why shouldn't all Freemasons who enjoy our facilities and membership of other Orders pay their share!! Surely, any strategy that can benefit our organization should be enthusiastically embraced. We are all duty bound to maintain our loyalty to our Leadership that are signatories to the document.

In closing, allow me to quote in part from an address by a Senior Freemason in Arkansas:

"We are many members, but just one body. Whether we sink or swim as a Fraternity will

depend not on who is the oldest or the biggest or the most colourful, but how we have worked together as a body, not your thing, not my thing, but our thing”.

“Freemasons Our Future”

An Address by R W Bro D M Booker, Chairman of Membership.

I have been asked to address you on the progress of the working group “Freemasons Our Future” which was facilitated by Mr Wayne Lyons. The group was formed in 2005 and was made up of younger Freemasons - both younger in age and younger in years of membership. This group put in a large amount of time and effort and in late 2005 they presented a report to the Board of Management. The BOM formed a sub committee in Feb 2006 to review the findings of the group.

The working group focused on 4 main areas that they saw as vital to our future development:

- The introduction of a Primary Aim Statement – in other words “what we are about”.
- Communication - effectiveness of the methods we use between the administration and Lodges, Lodges and their members and the Organization and the community.
- Induction of members whether that be in:
 - Education of new members.
 - Education of existing members.
 - Support of the mentor system available to “newer” members including new Master Masons.
- Governance – the group gave no recommendations as they saw this as too large an area to address and they did not have the experience to cover the issues.

In the first three areas, the sub-committee and the Board of Management accepted the working group’s recommendations and these are being facilitated.

The Primary Aim Statement – “Freemasonry offers stability and direction to life “:

- Freemasons grow as individuals through education and personal development.
- Our core values are:
 - High moral standards.
 - Commitment to family, charity and aged care.
 - Courtesy, honesty and fairness in all dealings.

This statement has been adopted and will be appearing on all our stationary.

Other issues:

- Communication methods are being reviewed. There have been some issues with the internal database that are being addressed.
- The web site is being reviewed with particular emphasise on the introduction page and the use of a more modern approach.
- The “Inducting a Candidate Programme” is being reviewed.

The group also recommended the use of a “Brand Manager” to coordinate the promotion of the Organization. If this occurs, promotion of the Organization will not bear results without the complete support of the entire membership. It is not just the job of one person, or one small group of people, but every single member of this Organization.

Many of you are members of Lions, Rotary or Probus and wear the associated badges. Be proud of our Organization and wear the Square and Compasses, our logo, on your everyday apparel. It might be a tie, a lapel badge, or a watch, but make it visible.

Just the other day I had a meeting with the Grand Master and he was dressed in a suit. I asked him why he did not have our badge on his lapel. His reply was "Oh I have 5 suits"! My reply was "You need 5 badges"!

For our Organization to progress into the future we need to

- Be proud of it.
- Understand the "Primary Aim Statement".
- Act as Freemasons and "Market Ourselves".
- Take opportunities to talk about Freemasonry.

Our future depends on us!

National Health Project and the Men's Health Institute

An Address by V W Bro Robert Clyne, Director of Community Relations.

Brethren, most of us remember vividly our first car. We cleaned it, we polished it, we listened to it for noises, we regularly checked the oil, water and tyres and we serviced it at regular intervals. What a pity that as men we haven't looked after our bodies the same way that we have looked after our cars.

For some reason we, as men, have been secretive about our health. We have generally ignored most symptoms, simply waiting for them to go away and a lot do. We have generally put off going to the doctor. The statistics tell us that this has too often been a tragic mistake. It is interesting to observe the major leadership role that this Jurisdiction has played in proactively addressing this problem.

Indeed, it would be fair to say that we have been the driving force in developing a national project for Freemasonry, which has come to fruition this month and has attracted widespread national media coverage of our activities.

Here in South Australia and The Northern Territory we tend to be the leaders in a lot of things! The other states have always been a bit slow on the uptake.

As you are well aware, the National Project is a series of community seminars held around Australia called – Men's Health – No More Secrets. This is an exciting initiative as well as an historic one. It is the first time that the various jurisdictions have been able to agree on and work together on a national project and one which involves all Freemasons in Australia and New Zealand.

The National Project for Freemasonry Australasia is all about being, or becoming relevant in the community as Freemasons. It is about making us as Freemasons an organization, which is relevant in contemporary society.

The challenge, which we are initially faced with, and there are many, was to find a project, which we as Freemasons could identify with and that would be relevant to the community and us. One that would enable us as Freemasons to take a real leadership role and one that was capable of making a significant contribution.

A tall order, but as a male organization, that long neglected area of men's health was a natural and perfect fit. Here was a niche for us and thus the national project committee developed the "Men's Health – No More Secrets" campaign.

Look at the highly successful Trailer Raffle. This project gets us out into the community but is manned by a small but enormously loyal band of aging volunteers. I salute them. They are a skeleton crew, they need your support. The second Freemasons Art Exhibition was hugely successful. There were over 500 works of art valued at more than \$350,000 on display. Again only a handful of volunteers. Please brethren your support is required.

The launch of the Men's Health project was at the inaugural Grand Master's Dinner and was very successful. This was not intended as a fundraiser but did raise \$1500 for Men's Health Research. The great aspect of the Project, which I find inspiring, is discovering and understanding what we can achieve when we want to. There are some 350 seminars registered in Australia with 30 in South Australia and the Northern Territory. I know that the Grand Master is keenly aware of and grateful to those lodges that took up the challenge. We all know that as a team we can achieve great things.

It is planned to establish The Freemason's Institute of Men's Health. Although there are groups active in men's health there is nothing bringing them all together. We have this opportunity to establish a research facility in Adelaide, which will not only retain our best and brightest minds, but one which will attract them from interstate and overseas. It will probably require funding of around \$3.5 Million per year with about \$500,000 of this coming from Freemasonry. I am able to inform you that Professor John Funder from Melbourne has been engaged to prepare a business plan for establishing this Institute.

The Chairman then presented the third proposition for discussion and resolution:

Proposition 3:

That the Grand Lodge appoint a public relations consultant to act on behalf of the Craft and that he be assigned to put into place a strategy to ensure exposure of the Craft to the general public to create a favourable image with a view to fostering membership growth. That adequate funds be allocated by the Grand Lodge and that a committee of seven members of the Craft be selected to instigate a marketing plan as the core thrust in planning for the benefit of the Craft. This committee to consist of the Chairman of Membership and Development, the Director of Community Relations and five members from Craft Lodges. That this committee prepares the initial format and that the final draft is presented to all brethren at the April 2007 Communication for implementation by the end of June 2007.

Proposed by W Bro G Woolford of Sir Samuel Way Lodge No 48 and Seconded by Bro P Robinson Sir Samuel Way Lodge No 48.

After considerable discussion the motion was put and lost.

Freemasons' Historical Society

An Address by M W Bro R K Casson, Past Grand Master.

Earlier this year at the urging of V W Bro Robert Clyne an informal meeting was called to discuss the feasibility of establishing a Freemasons' Historical Society. This meeting resolved that the project should proceed and a circular was distributed among Lodges advising of the inaugural meeting of the South Australian and Northern Territory Freemasons' Historical Society, which was held at this Masonic Centre on Thursday 31st August 2006.

The Grand Master invited me to head up the endeavour with W Bro Richard Num as the deputy, V W Bro Robert Clyne, Secretary/Treasurer, Librarian V W Bro George Woolmer, Museum Curator R W Bro Murray Olsson and Honorary Historian, R W Bro George Potter.

The following Mission Statement was agreed to:

To preserve, research and stimulate interest in the history of Freemasonry in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Some of the objectives of the Society include:

To promote the collection, preservation and exhibition of historical documents and records; To preserve and adequately store the artefacts and documents which are not required by the Grand Lodge of South Australia and Northern Territory. These artefacts and documents will be lodged at the State Library of South Australia; To publish historical articles, lectures, and other such material conducive to preserving the historical record of the Grand Lodge of South Australia & Northern Territory.

Membership of the Society is open to all Freemasons at no charge. People outside of Freemasonry can also be members.

R W Bro Rev G Potter addressed the Conference.

The Grand Master, MW Bro G L Bollenhagen, then addressed the Conference with the following as a précis of his closing remarks:

The success of today's Conference has been dependent upon the contribution from many brethren.

The first proposal highlights that we should all wear a lapel pin identifying us as Freemasons. Each Lodge should ensure that they obtain from the Grand Lodge office, the lapel pin to be presented to each initiate on the night of initiation.

The second proposal has provided the flexibility to enable a brother to make a more informed decision when joining a Lodge.

The Memorandum of Understanding was further explained and I again encourage the wearing of the Jewels of the Orders at Craft meetings. In turn I encourage the Lodges to invite representatives of the Mark and Royal Arch Chapter to their meetings.

The review of the status of the "Lyons Committee Report" has highlighted that whilst information is available from Grand Lodge, the responsibility for the use of that information lays with each Lodge.

The report on the National Project has identified many successful stories that have come from involvement in the Men's Health Project – No More Secrets and we should all be proud of the success that has been achieved.

The objective of the third proposal was to create a favourable image with a view to fostering membership growth. We should not overlook the contribution that is already being made to this objective from the recent Art Exhibition, the Men's Health Project and the Trailer Raffle.

The report on the Freemasons' Historical Society has highlighted the importance of the preservation of our records and documentation.

The closing remarks from the Grand Chaplain were a reminder to us all to uphold the practice of Masonic Brotherhood.

I close by extending my thanks to each of you for your attendance and participation today.

**Report prepared by
David Kitching
Grand Superintendent**

