



## **ATF PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2010**

The year since our last AGM has been a relatively short one in some ways, largely because we had to focus a lot of our efforts on bringing ourselves up to date on some important administration issues, and I'm pleased to report that we are now in a much tidier state, thanks to the combined efforts of all on the committee.

Our database is now fully functional and updated, and we are now able to determine the status of every member, and can more easily execute mail-outs and other communications.

Our new Secretary, Tom has done a marvellous job of rebuilding our website, which is now also fully functional and updated, and sporting some new features, including offering online membership renewal. This feature will soon also offer an EFTPOS payment option.

Our website will eventually have a full content management system, so that finally we can take full control of our site, and insert important updates and announcements as we need to, without having to refer to a 3rd party. This will be an important development, as it means we will no longer always be behind the 8-ball in terms of currency with our news and information.

Projects begun in the previous term are now fully complete, and we are now looking at beginning projects on other waters. Our Projects Officer will have more to say about that in his own report, but it is important to note here that the ATF is now becoming more widely recognized within government circles as an agency willing and able to take on and complete important projects that offer benefits for recreational anglers across the board, and do so without fuss, on time and under budget.

In that light, it has huge connotations for the future of the ATF as we set ourselves up for the coming year of activity. With a new government to work with now, there is now a lot of work to be done in building a rapport with the incumbents. Policy statements and election promises must be pursued in order to 'keep the bastards honest', and make sure that there is not a single step backwards in the months following the election. No doubt they will be keen to put their own stamp on things, but we will need to be diligent, even a dripping tap, to ensure there is no major deviations from what has already been established by the previous government.

This will undoubtedly mean more meetings to attend as the new Minister settles into office and makes himself known to all the current players in recreational fishing. We need to be at the front of the queue when he starts handing out favours.

Change of government is always a very difficult time for organizations like ours that depend on our relationships with everyone from the Minister down, and so it is now with the Liberal Party coming into government in Victoria. I am very much looking forward to meeting the new Minister appointed to managing our natural environment, and forging a new relationship. Naturally we already have a list of topics to discuss, including the need for funding of peak bodies like ourselves.

There will naturally be some changes in the way things are done by the new Minister, but I am hoping they will be minor, and not result in any delays or interruptions to things already in motion.

With all this in mind, it is also time for us to organize ourselves to begin expanding our horizons. Interstate growth is as important to us as keeping our members financial. We currently have a small but growing number of members in NSW, Tas and SA, plus a couple in Qld & WA. Interest has already been shown in NSW and Tasmania in setting up ATF branches, so clearly it is time to put that interest and enthusiasm to good use. The establishment of ATF branches outside Victoria will be an important step in legitimising us as a truly national representative organization for trout and trout anglers.

I see the establishment and growth of interstate branches as vital to the future of the Foundation, and will become central in achieving our broader goals. We already have the tools and talents at our disposal to achieve this - we have a first rate team on committee at the moment, and I believe we are better placed than ever before to seize whatever opportunities come our way in order to fulfil our charter. The year ahead, complete with its forecast high rainfall, can be a momentous one for trout and trout angling - it's up to us to make the most of it.

In 2010 and beyond, thanks to the untiring efforts of our present and past committees, the ATF voice is heard in many forums -

- on the Roundtable Forum
- at the Goulburn-Broken Fishery Management Plan committee
- on the Stream Classification Committee
- at the Macquarie Perch Recovery Program
- within Native Fish Australia
- and with Parks Victoria, Fisheries Victoria, DSE, DPI and the Minister's own office.

The work done in previous years and carried forward this year has set us up so that we are now a recognized advocate for trout and trout anglers. This is entirely in line with our stated aims and objectives, and is something we must be vigilant in maintaining and protecting.

We nowadays sit at table and work alongside organizations and people that, years ago, it would simply not have happened - this represents the proactive movement of our organization, and as we continue to share our visions with other like minded organizations, our ability to work more effectively within the machinations of government and fishery management will only expand and improve.

This year has seen us improve our ability to communicate. After an absence of a few years, the ATF has once again been able to provide a presence at the annual Melbourne Fishing Show. I would particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of Tom White and Ken McMaster who both put in a huge amount of time to put the display together and run it, ably assisted by a small handful of others from the committee. We did well in recruiting nearly 50 new members at the show, and an unknown number since.

Jarvis Walker's fantastic and continued support was a major feature of the display with them donating to the ATF a motor/boat package to be offered as a draw prize. They also provided first class visual displays. With support like this, we are able to do much more than without it. I have personally thanked Trevor Maundrell at JW for their support, and hope they continue with it. If we as an organization can garner more corporate support of this calibre, our future will look very bright indeed.

More recently, we added to our committee in the form of a Stocking Manager. Stuart Rees brings with him a great deal of experience in trout stocking and management, so we are pleased to have him on board. One of the first benefits of his appointment was the receipt of 20,000 trout fingerlings, which are targeted for some of the smaller Western Victorian lakes that have suffered

during the drought. This is a big win for us, and will provide a much needed boost to trout fishing in the West.

This year we have benefitted from the continued support of the Outdoor Life Radio Show. Host Bill Davey is an avid trout angler, and fully supports the efforts of the ATF, and accordingly has pledged his full support through his popular radio show and monthly newsletter. This is an excellent portal for us to communicate on another level with the angling public, and I'm really pleased that Bill has continued with such enthusiasm.

During the year, we were involved with tree planting at the Marysville trout barrier, a most important occasion in which the ATF has played a leading role in protecting the endangered *fuscus galaxiid*. We were back to Marysville more recently, at the same location, to support Fisheries Victoria & the Arthur Rylah Institute at the Native Fish Awareness Campaign. I must thank especially Ken McMaster and Lyndon Webb, ably assisted by their good wives, for their superb effort in arranging and running our part of this event.

These events have great significance for trout anglers, highlighting our ongoing rapport with native fishers and the native fishery. The ATF has come a long way in the past few years in this respect, and the big winner is our trout fishery.

I would at this point particularly like to thank both Tom and Ken for the manner in which they have both stepped in to take up the slack while I've been partly immobile over the past few months - a knee injury has severely limited my ability to travel (and fish!), keeping me at home for most of the time since early August. Thanks guys for stepping up, I really appreciated it.

2011 holds a lot of promise for us in so many ways, and I feel greatly confident in our ability to continue to move forward as an organization, as this committee boasts some of the most conscientious and hard working individuals in trout fishing. While we will face new challenges in the year ahead, I think the trout anglers of Australia need to know that the advocacy of their trout fishery could not be in better hands.

Thank you to all our committee members, past and present, and to all a happy Christmas and a safe and happy 2011.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod Barford', written in a cursive style.

Rod Barford,

President

December 2010