

NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2010



Committee Decides ARAMA's Future

By Kim Cox – Inaugural National President of ARAMA

In keeping with major planning changes taking place throughout the State, ARAMA is planning to meet the challenges of change over the next decade and beyond.

As one of our key stakeholders, the State Government has legislated to have all eight major regions in Queensland, develop regional plans to meet the challenges of growth. It has been timely for ARAMA to undertake a professional review to manage members' growth and the impact of change.

When ARAMA first formed on the Gold Coast in the early 1990's it was because business people who were pioneering the on-site management of units recognised the need to work and act as a group.

We have grown from an organisation which boasted some 100 members on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast in the early 90's to more than 1,000 members in three States with independent branches in key centres of Queensland. Our members administer more than \$20 billion in properties and we form an integral part of the property and tourist accommodation industry.

Your State Management Committee believed it was timely that we looked into the operation of our own organisation, with the desire to ensure that our structure and strategic directions were appropriate to manage the massive change that we will all be facing.

Your committee outlined some basic review considerations for ARAMA to go forward, for we had not had an independent review of all our elements and also our structures and operations before.

The State Committee has now received the report and has agreed to commence implementing some of the recommendations and is reviewing other recommendations as and when required as the reorganisation to a 21st century operation takes place.

We have accepted the reality that we need to move away from a predominately

volunteer based organisation to engage full time staff to manage the diversity of tasks, ensuring better servicing of branches and also the individual needs of members.

Under the recommendations, the new corporate structure will be responsible for the implementation of approved policy determining future direction and further growth of ARAMA and greater assistance for the local branches to achieve these goals.

We are proposing to establish a position of a full time Chief Operating Officer and initially the main focus of the role once engaged will be to commence an organisation restructure.

We believe it is important that we develop some more formal approaches to our operations and ensure that members fully understand the principles and program of ARAMA by creating an Operations Manual and Guidelines. In line with the recognition of the need for proper planning and documentation of timelines, we intend to develop an operations manual containing organisational operating procedures, policies and standards for all levels of operations within ARAMA, including paid employees, contractors and committees at both State and branch level.

We want to streamline the operational responsibilities of branches, to focus on services and delivery. Hence it was decided that fees are to be collected by state office and that there will be uniformity of fee structures across the state, taking into account the differences between regions. In addition, there will be parity of fees regardless of which branch a member joins.

We will improve communication by undertaking a comprehensive review of current communications such as e-newsletters, bulletins, a possible

quarterly magazine, the website and other new opportunities for greater social networking.

Our website has served us well, but we want to improve the current website to provide a more user-friendly environment. Whilst the content is excellent, a redesign is needed for navigation, and importantly its ability to assist managers in their business operations.

It is important we involve our members and the many specialists and experts that we have in our ranks to join our working team in developing strategies and policies, along with practical expertise as we take our position forward.

Our corporate successes over the years have been a direct result of commitment by a few industry veterans and the assistance of our network of associates.

This is not going to last forever and we need to be responsible in having a workable succession plan ensuring we have the retain talent within our ranks, making their contribution and commitment to the future of ARAMA.

Our members should not be bogged down with administration; they do enough of that in their working capacity, hence our restructuring commitment.

ARAMA has been successful as a grass roots member based operation and the "hands on" inputs will continue to be vital for us all.

Continued on page 2

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| Committee decides ARAMA's Future | 1 |
| Minister Campaign Swim Between the Flags | 2 |
| State Conference Determining ARAMA's Future | 2 |
| ARAMA Supports Mandatory Safety Switches | 3 |
| Regional Plan for Whitsunday Hinterland and Mackay | 3 |
| Maintenance Issues | 4 |
| Window Safety Compliance | 4 |
| Resolving Conflicts | 5 |
| Government Announces Ecotourism Initiative | 6 |
| A Look Overseas - Green Building in Germany | 7 |
| ARAMA Branch Events | 7 |
| Industry News | 7 |
| Contacts | 8 |

Minister Campaign Swim Between the Flags

The recent drownings at the Gold Coast have led to a wider campaign initiated by Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor to raise more awareness amongst tourists about our beach hazards.

ARAMA would like to encourage its members to pass on the important information of the "swim between the flags" safety campaign to holiday guests, especially when they are visiting our beaches for the first time.

The ocean is an extremely unpredictable force of nature. Lifesavers and lifeguards monitor beach conditions daily and only erect red and yellow flags where conditions are deemed safe. Areas outside the flags are dangerous.

Many visitors do not understand that dusk is shark feeding time. Swimming at shark feeding time increases the swimmer's chances of being part of the food chain.

What to advise your holiday guests: If swimmers get caught in a rip they need to know not to panic and not to try to swim against the rip current. If they are confident they need to swim parallel to the beach which is often towards the breaking waves, which can assist them back to shore. If at any time they feel they are unable to reach the beach they need to know to raise their arm and call for assistance, while floating to conserve energy. Let's hope we can contribute to preventing more tragedies and promote the positive attributes of a Queensland holiday and the care and protection provided for visitors.

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Continued from page 1

However we must have the ability to have professional representation on a number of fronts.

Our associate membership opportunities have seen us develop major initiatives such as the Legal Advisory Panel, establish major policies to present to government and to provide well researched and argued policy reviews and advice.

I pay a sincere tribute to our Executive Officer John Anderson, who has provided

a strong commitment to members and branches and has been a great advocate for ARAMA in all areas of Government.

The work-load however, continues to increase and as the industry expands, so must ARAMA.

I trust that we can progress this implementation of change at a steady rate to ensure that we have a smooth transition that maximises opportunities for ARAMA as we march forward over the next few decades.



State Conference Determining ARAMA's Future

By Trevor Rawnsley, Chief Operating Officer

ARAMA's fate constituted the key focus of the first ARAMA State Conference held in Brisbane in February, which proved to be a huge success with constructive discussion on the organisation and where it should position itself in the next 5 years.

Committee representatives from each Queensland branch were present to reflect on the functioning of ARAMA as a member-based association, that has grown to service 1,000 members state wide representing the management rights industry's interest in a professional manner.

There is a clear need for ARAMA to work together as one cohesive unit rather than as individuals in small disparate cells, as it currently stands with different methods and objectives. The key focus of the one day State Conference was on members' needs and how ARAMA can continue to provide benefits to members and attract and retain more members.

Presentations were delivered by President Kim Cox and Executive Officer John Anderson outlining the past 17 years of the maturing of the management rights industry and with it our association. ARAMA has had significant successes in recent years in relation to the development of the legislative framework in Queensland.

In focus was the organization moving forward in the 21st century and its resource management to provide additional benefits for members.

In some ways, I would say, ARAMA is a sleeping giant as it is the single largest provider of both short and long-term accommodation in Australia and not many realise it.

Our members could benefit from this fact and also from a re-energised and more business focused ARAMA. Of much importance was a strategic report provided by Adrian Caruso from TA Fastrack providing recommendations to ARAMA to create a plan, which could take the association into the future.

Kim Cox has mentioned the most important outcomes regarding the membership fee structure and collection in his President's Report in this newsletter. I am looking forward to be an integral part of the changes that will take place in the next few months and years.

ARAMA Supports Mandatory Safety Switches

ARAMA Queensland has formally lodged a submission with the Electrical Safety Office (ESO), supporting the organisation's proposed extension of mandatory safety switch requirements.

In November last year the ESO sought public comment on its proposed extension of the requirement for compulsory fitting of safety switches to all forms of residential and domestic accommodation.

This included temporary residential accommodation places such as short-term holiday accommodation, hostels, boarding houses, hotels, motels, on-site temporary and semi-permanent accommodation provided by caravan and holiday parks, as well as for all Queensland domestic residences.

The implementation of this proposal would result in the extension of the protection afforded by safety switches to all residents regardless of their residential status or accommodation choices.

In its subsequent submission to the ESO, ARAMA Queensland supported the proposal to extend safety switch protection for all users of domestic and "quasi-domestic" electrical installations. However it raised concerns about the extended time frame for strata properties.

Many strata properties have some lots in the scheme with safety switches, while other lots do not have switches. We suggest that the inconsistent installation poses a safety concern. As the safety of each guest is too important to allow such an inconsistent approach, ARAMA members have encouraged owners to provide safety switches irrespective of the legislation. However there are still some inconsistencies as some owners will not take action until lawfully required.

In moving forward, ARAMA Queensland called on the ESO to include strata title buildings as a separate and specific category due to the variable uses that occur in the various parts of the scheme,

and for the work to be completed within two years of the introduction of the provision.

The switches are designed to cut the supply of power in a fraction of a second when a harmful level of electricity is detected leaking to earth. If a safety switch senses an imbalance in the active and neutral conductors in a circuit, it reacts quickly by cutting off the power supply in less than 40 milliseconds or 1/25th of a second.

For this reason ARAMA Queensland strongly urges all members of the industry to strictly maintain a proactive safety routine when it comes to electricity and electrical maintenance.



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Regional Plan for Whitsunday Hinterland and Mackay

The fast-growing Whitsunday Hinterland and Mackay have been focus of a new regional plan that will manage population growth and protect the region's lifestyle and environment for more than 167,000 residents.

It is expected that the region will grow by an additional 5,000 people per year and that by 2013 the population could reach 255,000.

The strategic plan will look into establishing core employment and economic hubs outside of the metropolitan areas whilst incorporating the unique position of having the Great Barrier Reef and rare rainforests as tourism destinations.

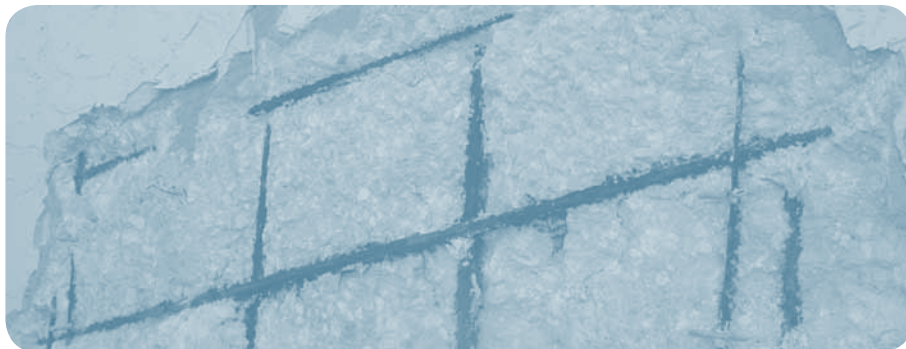
Furthermore the region has some of the nation's most productive agricultural, fishing and mining sectors in close proximity which has attracted an extra 22,000 people moving to the region between 2001 and 2006.

Consultation will be held with communities from Bowen to St Lawrence and west to Clermont to plan for future growth in order to balance social, environmental and economic needs.

The Whitsunday Hinterland and Mackay (WHAM) regional plan is expected to take more than a year to develop and will provide a planning horizon until 2031.

Maintenance Issues

Excerpt from a paper presented by Kim Cox at the Strata and Community Title in Australia for the 21st Century III Conference



My challenge today is to address what I see as the three most serious maintenance issues in our industry. The first being the collective group of building items, that emerges over time as the building ages.

Probably the most visible issue is “concrete spalling” which may be a combination of poor design, poor workmanship by contractors or wear and tear. It can be an expensive fix.

The structural integrity of the building must not be compromised for both safety and serviceability reasons. However, in a high-rise building often such repairs can be made when scaffold is on-site for another scheduled activity such as a repaint.

Another expensive repair item that can be difficult to diagnose results from water leaks. These water leaks may be caused by failing rooftop membranes or corroded window frames. Both are expensive to fix and should be identified in the sinking fund forecast and planning processes. In my view, these issues are not as serious as the next two on my list as these can

be foreseen, can be budgeted for and little can be done to avoid them. They are essentially wear and tear issues and the building quality will determine the time frame.

The second of our serious maintenance issue occurs where there is a relationship between the manager and the developer, essentially leading to a conflict of interest. We hear stories in buildings where the appointed caretaker or resident manager is alleged to have some prior relationship with the developer causing a conflict of interest, sometimes leading to time delays and ineffective addressing of building defects. Though it is evident that new buildings will suffer a number of problems such as cracked tiles, blocked drains, doors that do not fit correctly, and cracked concrete driveways and that it is unreasonable to expect the building contractor to send a team of tradesmen to fix each item. The building contractor will want to address all items together while some owners grow impatient and blame anyone who may be involved. None of these may be difficult to fix but the delays lead to frustration on a number of levels.

Changes to the strata legislation in NSW in 2008 have been designed to restrict the ability of a developer to sell to a “friendly manager” who will ignore his responsibilities to the body corporate. The NSW legislation introduced the concept of “connections” which is similar to the concept of “associate” in the Queensland legislation. In both cases, full disclosure of the relationship is required. ARAMA believes such legislative reform is in the best interest of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, the developer of a scheme must be held accountable for rectification of building defects. In simple terms, the developer is the party who has taken the financial risks in delivering his dream to the market. Some owners and bodies corporate believe that the developer deliberately avoids addressing some defects on the basis of the cost of rectification will be more than the legal cost of the owner or body corporate pursuing the developer. If this belief is proved to be correct, it is clearly unacceptable. Unfortunately, strata legislation ignores these issues and regards them as contract matters.

Window Safety Compliance

Over the past years ARAMA members have been unsure if their accommodation complied with Queensland window safety standards although generally speaking this should be the case as buildings should have been built within the Building Code of Australia and other building and planning laws.

The enquiries instigated by ARAMA to consult with Solutions ie to determine a more general advice if a building complies with the standard for buildings that have windows which are 4m or more above the ground surface.

In order to provide minimum compliance Solutions ie has advised

that owners and managers of buildings must ensure that any windows that can be opened on upper storeys have a barrier with an effective height of at least 865mm underneath them, if a person could fall more than 4m. A “barrier” is generally the wall under the window, but can also be furniture that if placed within reach of that window effectively lowers the height of the window. As a risk management strategy it is strongly recommended to install a lock or similar device to prevent the window opening wider than 10cm.

Consequently if you have a window which opens more than 10cm and is less than 865mm in height from the floor or from any furniture then it may

not comply with the standard and you may need to modify it so that it does, or seek further advice from a qualified specialist. Ultimately this means that both high-rise and low-rise buildings operating short or long term accommodation are affected by the regulation.

According to Solutions ie, furniture under windows has been found to be a contributory factor in nearly all of the 23 reported child-falls from high-rise buildings in the last five years, including the death in October 2009 of three-year-old Iman Akter Mostafa, in Sydney.

Further advice can be obtained from Solutions ie on 1300 136 036.

Resolving Conflict

By John Mahoney, Mahoney Lawyers

In the previous newsletter article I discussed tactics for avoiding conflict. I will now focus on strategies for resolving conflict.

The first thing you need to do is get to the bottom of the dispute. What is the true cause of it?

Look very closely at your own performance. Are you really doing all that is required of you under your agreement? Review your duties carefully. Don't just assume that you are doing everything.

One of the biggest problems we see is the huge gap in expectations of the manager and the unit owners. Contrary to some industry myths, you cannot play golf three days a week, it is not a "lifestyle" you have bought, the business is not risk free and you do have to perform in order to maintain your business. You cannot blame owners for expecting you to do a fair amount of work for the money they pay you. They will have expectations that you earn your salary. In bigger complexes, a body corporate has the right to expect that the remuneration it pays you should cover all your staff and at least one on-site manager working in the caretaking side of things.

Compare how your complex looks to others. Get someone independent to look at how you are looking after the complex. Be prepared to do some self analysis.

If you decide that perhaps your performance is the cause of the problem, you are in the best position to do something about it. Some of the things I will talk about might assist you in dealing with your committee in relation to areas where you decide you have not been performing.

If you are certain that the real issue is not your performance, you need to work out if the hostility towards you is one person, or a small minority, or the committee or unit owners generally. So assess properly the extent of unit owners' ill feelings.

It may be that there is just the one person who is the dominant cause of the problems? It is amazing how often one individual can poison the attitude of a committee or even unit owners generally. What is the true feeling of owners in the complex?

Is it a personality conflict? Could you

be the cause of that conflict? What if anything can you do to resolve / avoid that conflict?

Determine if the person or persons with whom there is conflict are likely to want to resolve the conflict or if their position/ideas are so entrenched, and their attitude towards you so hostile and bloody minded that there is little or no point in trying to reason with them. There will be situations where you know either from past dealings with the individual/s in question or because the nature of the individual/s is so obvious, that their ego or power craze is so strong that there is no chance at all of succeeding with any of the different strategies I will run through. If that is the case then another strategy is called for.

In case you know you have the support of your owners, either work with them to put in place at the next AGM a committee supporting rather than opposing you. If the AGM is too far away, consider requisitioning an EGM to sack the committee and put in place a replacement committee. The ability to succeed in this exercise will depend on unit owners' support – whether you have that will depend on the extent to which you have kept them on side using the tactics outlined earlier.

Assuming you conclude that the conflict is one that can be resolved, turn your mind to what is the principal aim of resolving the conflict.

Is the number one priority the preservation and/or extension of Agreements and maintenance of the value of the business so that you can sell. If so you will focus on solving any dramatic conflict without escalation – and maybe be prepared to be very compromising, so that you can sell and move on.

If the priority is to improve the working and living environment, you will be focussed on resolving the conflict in a sustainable way where you and the body corporate have a good ongoing working relationship.

Once you have the priority decided, work out how you are going to deal with

it. These are the typical ways in which conflict is dealt with.

1. Avoidance

This involves just ignoring or walking away from the conflict. This is the most frequently used strategy along with the next I will mention.

It is not a good way of dealing with conflict the majority of the time as it tends not to help. It is worth being considered as a strategy in situations where the conflict is just not worth the effort of being addressed. It is probably OK if you intend to sell and move on very quickly.

2. Accommodation

Here you take the conflict and submit. This strategy is very frequently used especially where there is low confidence and self-esteem. It is again not a very successful method of dealing with conflict, but it will do if you know that there is a solution coming soon, such as a sale.

3. Compete

This one means that you play your opponent at their own game and work hard to get your own way in the conflict.

This can be very useful when the conflict is mild and you are passionate about your stance, but can lead to a vicious circle as the conflict escalates. Be very sure you want to use this strategy as lowering yourself to someone else's level rarely shows you in the best light. It is certainly not a good strategy where you are dealing with an egotistical opponent especially one that has the support of the owners. It is one I would only use if I was certain that my opponent was wrong, that my opponent would not change his or her or their mind but that I had or would get the support of most of the owners if it comes to a full on dispute.

4. Compromise

This is a much more useful tactic to use: here you do not give in to the conflict, but work out a solution somewhere between the two sides.

It can lead to the obvious downfall of the actual solution leaving none of the sides happy. This is best to use when the

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goal is to get past the issue and move on - with the issue having relatively little significance. Of course you have to be careful that you do not set a precedent which lets your opponents think that they can walk all over you on anything. But it may be an answer if you have decided to sell and move on.

5. Collaborate

This is the most useful tactic, particularly with extremes of conflict. The aim here is to focus on working together to arrive at a solution, where both sides have ownership of and commitment to the solution.

Exactly which of the above strategies you adopt will depend largely on what you have determined is the cause of the conflict. But assuming that the conflict is genuine, then you should as early as possible go about trying to resolve it. Arrange a meeting with the relevant people – use a committee meeting if you have to.

Try and have reasonably minded committee members at that meeting – not just you and your opponents. Most of the time, collaboration will be the best tack.

To collaborate successfully on an issue such you need to follow a few basic guidelines.

- You must recognise that part of the problem is your own fault: you allowed it to happen and did not try to address it to begin with. You can use this aloud and actively take part of the responsibility, as this will put the onus onto the other person to take the other part of the responsibility. You will be amazed at what impact an admission of error on your part, or the acceptance of part of your opponent's argument, will have on your opponent. The tactic of finding something in an opponent's argument that you can agree with and then telling them that disarms them and often removes a lot of anger and hostility from the debate. Statements like "I can accept what you are saying about that and think you have a good point. But in relation to the other points..." are really helpful.
- Do not believe that the best defence is a good offence - that is part of the competing strategy.
- Manage yourself during the resolution attempt - learn calming strategies if you are hot-tempered, or confidence boosters if you are shy.

- Work the issue, not the person: this means addressing the behaviour rather than the entire existence of that person. Never lay blame, as this will only fan the fires. Question your opponent's views, not your opponent's character.
- If you are not getting anywhere, ask for further information from the other person about the reasons for their behaviour, but do not ask the questions with 'why' at the beginning - if you do this will actively put the other person under the spotlight and they will get defensive. Try and get to the real reason/s for the conflict. Often it will be a misunderstanding.

This is an interesting quote from a resource on conflict management: Remember above all that people who enjoy creating conflict are ultimately power-seekers who enjoy controlling others. Frequently this is because either they have suffered in a similar way before or feel that they have very little control over their own lives and does anything they can to feel in control. A little understanding will take you a long way both in resolving the situation and in putting it behind you when it is resolved.

Government Announces Ecotourism Initiative

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Queensland's natural tourism assets draw millions of domestic and international tourists and billions of dollars in tourism expenditure to our state every year.

To ensure a viable and sustainable tourism industry that will continue to compete with and surpass other states, the Bligh government has decided to develop new tourism products and attractions that will showcase Queensland's unique natural assets.

As part of the Tourism in Protected Areas project, the state government will offer nature based private and public investment opportunities for ecotourism in or near national parks.

The opportunities will be geared toward semi-permanent and low-impact development, for example, safari-style tent accommodation already available in other states.

The Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability Kate Jones said that commercial operators will contribute over and above any additional

management costs that may arise from the increased use of these parks.

Operators will have to pass strict biodiversity and environmental tests before they proceed to demonstrate their ecotourism credentials.

International tourists from Europe are keen ecotourism travellers and are generally willing to stay longer in Australia the Minister said.

They have a considerable interest in visiting remote places and staying in this type of low-impact accommodation that is on or adjacent to protected areas.

New nature-based tourism products will enhance Queensland's attractiveness to both international and domestic visitors, and therefore support local economies and jobs.

A Look Overseas – Green Building in Germany

The European Union is the most experienced market in relation to best practices on the development of sustainable buildings and their neighbourhoods.

Over the past decade several Councils and Commissions have been founded to facilitate the exchange of information and experience as to energy consumption of buildings.

In 2003 the Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) was created by the European Parliament and Council to oblige member states to define minimum energy performance standards and apply those for all new buildings and existing ones when being renovated.

Different member states have taken different approaches to implementing the legislation through national and EU level programs to assess and classify buildings as green. In the European context, green buildings denote those buildings where energy consumption is within the stipulated permissible limits specified by the European Commission. Germany is one of the leading countries in implementing the EPBD in Europe.

Examples of sustainable communities/buildings in Germany:

- The largest geothermal home heat project in Germany was launched in Cologne in 2006. The whole quarter with 383 apartments is heated only with geothermal power.
- The Solarsiedlung (Solar Settlement) in Freiburg Germany features PlusEnergy houses - the PlusEnergy house® is based on a multiple modular design system.
- The Sonnenschiff (Sun Ship) in Freiburg is also built according to German solar architect Rolf Disch PlusEnergy standards.
- The Vauban quarter in Freiburg where all houses are built to a low energy consumption standard, with 100 units designed to the Passivhaus ultra-low energy building standard.
- Houses designed by Baufritz incorporate passive solar design, heavily insulated walls, triple-glaze doors and windows, non-toxic paints and finishes, summer shading, heat recovery ventilation and greywater treatment systems.
- Solvis zero-emission factory in Braunschweig – the entire primary energy requirement is covered by a combination of solar and biomass energy sources.
- The head office of Unilever in Germany won the 'World's Best Office Building Award 2009'

ARAMA Branch Events

Brisbane Report

By Gayle Jensen, President

This is the Chinese "Year of the Tiger" and the Brisbane committee takes this on board as a year of action and change. It has been exciting to be part of the TA Fastrack review for Queensland branches and we wait with anticipation for the results of this review to further direct our new committee forward for what we expect to be an exciting 2010.

We have two main goals for 2010:

1. To increase membership thereby increasing influence with industry stakeholders and
2. Improve the mix of regional and combined meetings with

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Industry News

Pool Safety Legislation Passed

In 2008/9 the Queensland Government conducted a comprehensive review of its swimming pool safety laws prior to adopting its two staged swimming pool safety improvement strategy. Integral to the review process was the establishment of a swimming pool safety review Committee which made 23 recommendations aimed at improving the safety for children using pools.

As of 1 December 2009 these new standards are in place across Queensland to regulate the compliance and maintenance of pool safety for all newly installed swimming pools and spas.

The new standards deal with pool fencing, climbable objects, signage, safety compliance certificates and regular inspections. Refer to www.dip.gld.gov.au for compliance requirements if you have a new pool.

For all existing pools and spas the following measures will affect ARAMA members from 1 December 2010:

- Install swimming pool barriers to all existing indoor swimming pools, pools and spas associated with residential dwellings, hotels, motels, caretaker residences, including indoor swimming pools and caravan parks.
- The 5 year phase out of child resistant doors used as a barrier to existing swimming pools, unless sold or leased
- A mandatory point of sale and lease inspection system
- A new licensed class of swimming pool inspectors
- A swimming pool register whereby pool owners will be compelled to register their pools within 6 months from the laws taking effect

If a substantial portion of a pool fence is demolished or removed, it must be replaced with a new fence. The new fence must comply with the current pool fencing standards, not the standard that applied at the time the original fence was built. Different regulations apply to pool fences depending on when the pool was built.

The Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP) is still determining how these standards are to be implemented in the field for existing complexes that share a common swimming pool or spa. ARAMA Chief Operating Officer Trevor Rawnsley has been invited by DIP to discuss the practical implications of these legislative changes in the field.

RTA News

In early March the Residential Tenancies Authority has moved to Level 23, 179 Turbot Street, Brisbane. General Manager, Fergus Smith, said that in order to continue providing the high level of client service the RTA is renowned for, it was decided to look for a new location that could not only house current RTA activities but also meet future demand. Clients can continue to contact the RTA on 1300 366 311 phone number. The postal address remains unchanged.

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experienced speakers who can provide relevant support to Managers.

Brisbane committee members are full of enthusiasm and passion for our branch. We are in the process of doing our own member survey to see how to best meet the needs of Brisbane members. We have changed the mix of monthly regional meetings and are still trialing different models in order to increase membership, improve services and deliver relevant information.

As a new committee, we would like to recognise the hard work and achievements of previous committee members, and thank principally Brydon Halliday (Past President) and Jim Edwards (Past Treasurer) for all their years of service.

Brisbane branch is very lucky to have the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer Trevor Rawnsley close at hand for guidance as we proceed.

Late in 2009 Brisbane branch hosted a working lunch meeting with Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast Presidents. We feel it is important to work together, share ideas and open doors to a closer working relationship for the good of the South East Queensland region.

Like most areas in Queensland, the rental market has been hit by the global financial recession in 2009. While the market appears to be making some recovery, a lot of areas are still experiencing a slower start to 2010 than in the previous 12 months. The media report of expected higher percentage in rents is still not evident in a lot of suburban areas. This may be caused by the state government's introduction to low housing schemes to

help address the housing shortage, but only time will tell.

Gold Coast Report

By Chris Ward, President

The Gold Coast branch is welcoming a strategic planning report which prepares us for a more professional association as we move into 2010.

We look forward to help implement the new structures as we action the recommendations.

Unlike 2009, holiday letting at the Gold Coast is experiencing some rough times as the Australian Dollar is strong and government support like last year's stimulus package does not multiply bookings at our beautiful beaches as we'd like to see. But as we all add value or incentives to our accommodation packages to attract as many guests and tenants as we can, we see more people flocking to the coast.

Despite the daily work load our members have, the Gold Coast monthly dinner meetings are still a huge success. Our March Dinner where Ian World impressed with his presentation about risk management, debt elimination and partnership buy outs was again attended by more than 120 members. In April we are planning for a different theme with a comedian entertaining our members.

On the education side we have been able to organise speakers for most topic requests in the past and look forward to continue servicing our members and educate them on various topics of interest such as criminal awareness, business improvement, governance,

legislation, industry developments and guest handling. Our Education Night in May will be discussing the bulk electricity scheme which resident managers should be well aware of and if not considered as an option yet should attend to seek some advice on it. We would be glad to welcome other branch members.

Whitsunday Report

By Jo Mathews, President

As we are such a small community in Airlie, our members broadcast within our group any information or concerns warranting discussion and those who have anything to say jump in with their responses. So, because we solve most of the world's problems on a regular basis we only need to meet every two or three months.

We had a lovely Christmas breakup with a local operator offering us a heavily discounted evening cruise for the sole use of our ARAMA meeting. An informal agenda and left the evening open to general discussions and enjoying the balmy summer evening on the water - it also proves to be a good way to ensure that meetings do not run over time.

While we know that the Whitsundays is the best region in the state, our issues such as slow tourism periods are no different to any other region. Luckily, we are fortunate in having an extremely proactive local tourism board which encourages interaction and feedback from our ARAMA members.

But once the rain stops and the AUD\$ falls the tourists may even come back and that is the last of the problems solved.

As a member of ARAMA you receive the benefit of update emails that inform you about important issues and developments of the industry. If your contact details change please email the state office at state@arama.com.au or phone (07) 3257 3927.

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