

## Farewell Speech – BMCS AGM – 27-Mar-2024

Good evening everyone.

I am leaving you tonight after ten years as Membership Secretary.

In my ten-year stint in the job I have processed over 6,200 payments totalling over \$352,000.

I just wanted to say that, although the job has involved lots of work, both as Membership Secretary, and when running the No Airport Campaign, it has been an honour and a privilege to serve the Society and its Members.

I joined the Management Committee for the first time in 1996, with no idea what I was getting myself into.

It turned out to be one of the great experiences of my life.

Sitting around a table with the likes of Hugh Paterson, Lyndal Sullivan, Linda Thomas, Jessica Yuille, Jacqueline Reid, Philippa Fincher and Kevin Bell was a delight, I learned so much from these amazing people.

My second stint as Membership Secretary began in April 2014, when Lachlan Garland resigned from the job.

This decade has been even more exciting.

I have been able to work with and admire Bart Beech, Brian Marshall, Madi Maclean, Angela Langdon, Tara Cameron, Paul Vale, and a host of others, all working together for a common purpose.

I also want to pay tribute to the friends I have made and lost along the way, including:

- Reg and Dulcie Toseland
- Robin Corringham
- Imre and Joan Gahl
- Wilson and Graham Alcorn
- Denis Kevans
- Auntie Joan Cooper
- Marion Hawley
- Marie McInnes
- Ruth Ley
- Kevin Bell
- Lachlan Garland
- Gary Humble
- Sue Morrison
- Warwick Mosman
- Haydn Washington
- Tom Whitton
- Les Coyne

These people greeted me with open arms, treated me as their equal, were my friends and colleagues, and have now left us.

My relationship with Les Coyne was particularly special.

In the years after we met in the mid-90s, we spent many a long lunch at the Conservation Hut, or the Blue Mist Café, fixing all of the problems of the world over a cappuccino or three.

Les was a great man, a friend, a mentor, a tireless worker for the cause of preserving and protecting the beautiful Blue Mountains.

I miss his intellect and his friendship.

I will also pay special tribute to another great man, your Website Officer and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Alan Page.

Alan was President when I joined the Committee this time around, and our relationship got off to a rocky start as I tend to go at things like a bull at a gate.

But once he calmed me down and brought me into the fold, we worked together for a decade without incident.

Alan has had his personal issues to deal with, and yet he turns up, week after week, year after year, to keep the Society ticking along, the Web site looking great.

He brings wisdom and calm to the Committee.

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When you leave here tonight, have a good think about what YOU can do for this great organisation.

The Management Committee is always looking for new talent, new ideas, new people, new energy.

Perhaps you are the next Event Coordinator, Publicity Officer or Bushcare Officer.

Don't be put off by the great minds who will be your colleagues, just get yourself involved, learn from them, put forward your own ideas.

You will definitely make a difference, and you will enjoy yourself along the way.

Thank you and farewell.

Ross Coster