



## **President's Report to Annual General Meeting 2011**

I am pleased to be chairing my first Annual General Meeting. It was a gentle start for me as I had overseas travel and family commitments for the first few months, and Brian Korner kindly agreed to continue as Acting President during my absence.

I have been amazed by the pace of activity and projects undertaken by the Management Committee. BSOL is fortunate to have a group of such dedicated and industrious members managing the Association on your behalf.

This year with funding from Brisbane City Council we presented two free facilitated workshops for our mentors and supporters. The quality of presenters was exceptional, including representatives from industry, government and education. Hilary Langford, principal consultant and founding director of Oliver and Langford volunteered her services as facilitator, adding to the success of the events. Two professional speakers were engaged, and our audience was enthralled by remembrances from Bob Ansett and by technological whizzery from Peter Blasina, better known as the Gadget Guy. Facilitated workshops encouraged our volunteers to participate in BSOL's future planning. General feedback was very positive, and I would like to make these workshops an annual event.

We were also successful in obtaining a grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for \$5,300 to purchase a Roadshow Kit. This will include light-weight presentation tools with a little Netbook and a slim data projector which can be sent by courier for our members to use when giving talks to seniors organisations or participating in expos and events.

This is our tenth year since incorporation and Marilyn Hooper and Lurline Slater have produced a special edition 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet to be unveiled at our end-of-year party on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December.

A new Member Information System was rolled out this year, developed by volunteer mentor Mike Walker with support and assistance from Rozie Lange and Ben Munford and others. It is a comprehensive system to automate our routine correspondence and reports as well as provide up to date information on member status and learner-mentor links for administration and for managers of our hubs. I also initiated a three-month learner survey to capture the valuable opinions and suggestions of our learners while their initial training is still fresh. And the annual learner survey was revised and simplified to solicit views of longer-term membership.

A working party chaired by John Noad prepared a draft strategy document entitled "Toward 2015: A Possible Future." After extensive consultation a final report was produced and

adopted by the Management Committee as a blueprint for our future. This full report is available on the BSOL website. Three sub-committees have now been established to look at how this strategy can be progressed.

In addition to long term strategic planning, in July your Management Committee convened a special session to look at short-term priorities and objectives. The day started with an intense analysis of our current situation, looking at our internal Strengths and Weaknesses and external Threats and Opportunities. A top priority for the next six months is our membership base, both attracting new members and retaining existing members. Total membership numbers continue to decline and the number of new members joining BSOL has dropped from 912 new members in 2008 to 572 new members in 2010. This is likely due to a smaller pool of seniors needing our basic services. Many people retiring from the workforce today would have been required to use computers on some level at their place of employment, and so would already possess basic skills. So our priority is to look at additional services we can provide to attract and retain those learners who already possess basic skills and to publicise our unique services to those who still need to learn computer basics.

Recent research on “Older Australians and the Internet”, available on the BSOL web site found that “only 4% of those aged 65 years and over who have never used the Internet were likely to use the Internet in the future”. The researcher’s recommendations include “expanding the availability of one-on-one training, focusing on the needs of individual users”. To the best of my knowledge, BSOL is the only volunteer organisation in Australia providing one-to-one lessons in the learner’s home on their own computer and at a nominal cost averaging about \$5 per visit.

To bolster our publicity efforts, we have produced a professionally designed poster and brochure. Question and Answer sessions in council libraries across town have been widely publicised by BCC and the libraries. And we have been running paid adverts on radio 4MBS and in the Brisbane Seniors newspaper.

This has been both a challenging and rewarding year for me. I am grateful for the support of the management committee as well as other volunteers who are highly skilled professionals. Their achievements include developing and managing the Member Information System; producing the monthly newsletter; installing and maintaining the hardware and software in the City Training Centre; presenting group workshops and lectures; chairing our three special interest groups; developing and documenting policies; dealing with telephones and reception and managing the administration of the city office. I especially want to thank our hub coordinators and mentors, the backbone of our association who cheerfully provide the training and support for our computer novices. BSOL is a very special organisation and with your support we will continue to provide a valuable and valued service to the seniors of greater Brisbane.

**Membership Statistics**  
**1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011**

Hub	New Learners	Reinstatements	Renewals	New Mentors	Total	Detachments
Bayside	34	3	15	4	56	49
Central	27	6	16	13	62	34
East	33	8	31	1	73	64
Inner North	22	5	30	2	59	53
Inner West	18	13	30	5	66	50
Apple Mac	18	4	18	2	42	43
North Central	16	9	36	1	62	103
North East	41	14	28	1	84	54
North	47	7	12	2	68	70
South	49	11	24	10	94	89
West	7	2	15	1	25	40
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>649</b>

Total membership at time of AGM 24/9/2011: 1,121