

AEVA ADELAIDE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014

2013/14 has been a year of steady growth for our branch. We now have 85 members, which makes us only second to WA for size. This is impressive, since we only reformed in 2008.

Perhaps more pleasing is the attendance of our monthly meetings, which has averaged just over 38 (including visitors and speakers). This is attributable to the splendid program that Eric has put together for us month after month, and also to the willing participation of those attending.

The practice of keeping official business brief, and concentrating on the “interesting stuff”, has kept the meetings relevant to those present. I believe (hope) that the segments on members’ projects have served as inspiration to all. Certainly, the number of builds completed has been impressive.

The aims of AEVA are broad, and include more than the building of EVs at home, but, by my observation, this remains the main interest of our members. As a result, we have concentrated our energies on this aspect. This is shown by the steady increase in the number of people who arrive at meetings in an EV to the point where we have averaged 5.6 per meeting, the majority being owner-built.

We have also witnessed the start of VOLT production by GM, the Kangaroo Island EV initiative, and albeit slow uptake of commercially available EVs, notably the Mitsubishi i-MiEV and Nissan Leaf.

The development of plug-in hybrids is a pleasing step forward, for although they are not pure electric-only vehicles, they overcome the issue of range that still plagues pure EVs in Australia, where distances tend to be too great for a single charge in all but local commuting.

The issue of range is being addressed by improvements in battery technology and by the introduction of charging points in strategic places. To this end, we have initiated a program to determine some attractive touring routes around Adelaide, and to try to have charging points installed along them. Hopefully, these routes will prove attractive to their sponsors by improving business along them.

All of the above throws stark focus on the complete lack of leadership by Federal and State Governments. They have done little to encourage the use of EVs both by offering no incentives as is done in almost every developed nation, and taking no initiative in encouraging the necessary supporting infrastructure. This is disappointing, and will mean that Australia will trail rather than lead in what promises to be the next major development in road transport globally. Such as has been done, has been done at Local Government level, and all credit to them.

The Branch has managed well financially, and we have been able to pursue our programs without embarrassment. This is subject to a separate Treasurer's Report. It is sufficient to say that we are solvent, and in good shape for the future.

Our external programs and participation include the popular Meet-ups, various Field Days, Science Alive! and the Goolwa Gopher Festival and F1 Gopher GP. These events not only get our message out, but provide the social interaction that creates the networks and camaraderie so important in keeping a group together and on track.

It now remains for me to thank all our office-bearers for their support, particularly Eric Rodda, our tireless Secretary. Eric has, once again, done the heavy lifting, and without his work the branch would not be the vibrant one that it is. Thanks also to all our members who have made the meetings and events work, and, finally to my wife, Jane, who has supported me behind the scenes with counsel and comfort, and put up with all my comings and goings.

Edward Booth
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