

VIA Chairman's report for the 2020 – 2021 membership year

## **Introductions and Acknowledgements**

I am pleased to be writing my first Chairman's report on behalf of your Board of Directors. The last 12 months have seen significant but positive change for our association, we have adopted a new constitution, established a Member Council and elected a Board of Directors. These changes came about after many months of work by members and the former National Executive. For many it was the end of the project, they had successfully established VIA's new operating structure and for that I would like to thank them.

For the VIA team however, the journey has only just begun! Our opportunity is to now foster and grow this new form of member participation and for VIA as an industry association to be better and stronger because of it.

I would like to acknowledge the support of our members. Your time and resources provided so freely this year, along with your continued financial support means that VIA has started its new journey on the right foot. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the small but motivated VIA team. The last few years have been full of uncertainty and change, I admire the way they have 'gotten on with things' and so quickly adapted to their new working normal. Thank you for what you have given to help get VIA to where it is today.

Because of our new Association structure this report will be split into two parts, the first will be a report on behalf of our Board and provide commentary on the Governance performance of VIA. The second will be a summary of activity on behalf of our Council and will reflect on its first year.

As well as my report you will hear from the VIA team at our AGM, they will be updating members on the year that has been. This will give you insight into the work they have done on your behalf as well as up-date you on what the next 12 months may bring.

## **Board update**

The Board was formally elected by Council in August of 2020 and comprises myself, Sean Stevens (Vice Chair), Matt Battle and Ken Quigley. Our role is to provide the Governance function for the association and to support David as CEO in his role. I am pleased to report that the Association Governance affairs are all in order, the team are all performing within the scopes of their roles and the association is becoming more disciplined and focused as it works to fulfil its new member mandate and purpose.

One item of particular interest to members will be our financial performance. I am pleased to report that the association has delivered a surplus for the year of \$47,000 against the AGM draft budget of \$247. This is a significant improvement on the \$180,000 deficit the previous year and was achieved through a combination of increased subscription income and a significant reduction in operating expenses.

The \$47,000 is made up of two parts, approximately \$30,000 is an operating surplus, being the difference between membership subscription and operating expenses, the balance of \$17,000 is the income remaining from a special member contribution fund that is ringfenced for VIA activity relating specifically to the proposed 'Clean Car' import regulations.

The Board would like to thank the members who have contributed to this fund, their support has enabled the engagement of some high-value consulting support to shape the recent VIA submissions.

It is this Board's goal to make VIA a financially sustainable association able to meet the needs of its members, this means that a focus for VIA over the coming years will be to grow its income through the attraction of new members while at the same time maintaining a close eye on operating expenses.

The Board acknowledges that as VIA makes progress towards that goal, from time-to-time additional expenditure may be required. As and when the Board will need to decide the best option for funding those activities, which could include asking members for additional support as noted above or temporarily allowing VIA to operate in a deficit, if that deficit is not detrimental to the long-term viability of the association.

### **Council Update**

The Council has worked this year to 'find its feet' and establish an operating rhythm. Being a new feature in the VIA structure much of this is still a work in progress, however I am pleased to report that positive steps forward have been made.

Since being formed in July last year the Council has met three times (October, December and February) and at each meeting we have seen an outstanding level of engagement from Council members. The Council was formed to bring members together and provide a platform for communication and participation, based on the performance so far it is clear that its purpose is being fulfilled.

A key feature of the Council meetings and one that I believe has provided a needed boost to the mana of VIA has been the inclusion of guest participants. At each meeting we have invited key policy makers and Government officials to give a short address and then participate in a Q&A with Council.

We have spoken with Andrew Caseley the CE of EECA, Peter Mersie the CE of MOT and Dr Rod Carr Chair of the Climate Change Commission. On each occasion they participated in a robust conversation with Council on significant industry topics and through the delivery of key questions we were able to champion VIA's position and participation.

As you can see from our guest speakers, climate related import regulations have been the number-one topic for Council this year and as many of these issues remain unresolved it will most likely remain a significant feature moving forward.

I have no doubt though that over the coming year, as Council becomes further entrenched in the VIA structure that the depth and breadth of topics discussed will change.

With our annual Council elections being held shortly there may well be some change to the Council composition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank any departing members for their contributions and welcome any new members joining us.

Chris Stephenson

**Board Chair**