

Chairman's Report August 25 2021

After 4 years at the Chair, I am very comfortable handing over the reigns to my very capable, and Industry/Board savvy Vice Chair Wendy Perdon.

When I was surprised to be elected in August 2017, I inherited a board which had no clear direction or strategic plan. It had just been granted \$25,000 in the Regional Visitor Centre Sustainability Grant Program 2017-18 funding, which was ostensibly to elevate the FVVC to an accredited VC. We were able to put this grant to good use with rebranding, developing strategic plans, creating a new website and image library. This seed funding was a great springboard to develop the board and promote the Ferguson Valley.

Despite lobbying for and being granted funding to develop the Ferguson Valley and Wellington Forrest, of which our "Pop-up Visitor Centre" was an integral part, all my efforts have proven unsuccessful to get this project off the ground.

Over the last year we have seen the completion of the FV signage, the tidying up and development of Gnomesville, and of course the very exciting prospect of the Lost and Found event in September. Most events are fully booked or selling well, with a couple being "Tweaked" to improve sales. Written programs and SW Times promotion will be coming in the next week or so.

Through the hard work of your Board Ferguson Valley Marketing inc. has become a well-respected and highly functional body which has helped put the Ferguson Valley offerings well and truly on the map.

I joined the Ferguson Tourism committee (a council subcommittee) about 25 years ago and was a part in its growth stages through FVMP to its present iteration as an incorporated independent body. When I joined it was with the specific interest in getting signage for the area. That is now completed, and I believe that the Ferguson Valley is well and truly on the Map as a destination not to be missed. It is my opinion that the next step is too "Mature" the tourism product, and to pave the way for more businesses to open. To this end FVM is engaging with the Shire of Dardanup, and ASW to brainstorm ways to do this next month under Wendy's leadership.

I would like to thank Brigitte our tireless Executive Officer for all the work she does to manage the day to day running across all of the activities we are involved in. You really are the cement which holds all the parts together.

It will be sad to see Kim Wesley, Tessa Eckersley and Graeme Mitchell leave the board. Kim has been a great inspiration to the board with fabulous ideas, and energy. She has been the Visitor Centre Liaison person working closely with the VC Coordinator.

Tessa has been so generous offering her marketing and artistic capabilities to the board for free, despite that being her profession. At 38 weeks pregnant, we wish her all the best for the next phase in her life.

I asked Graeme to come onto the Board as a project manager for the pop-up Visitor Centre when we thought that it had a green light. When the treasurers position became vacant Graeme very ably took it on helping us to understand our finances in a very strategic way.

All members of the Board have specific roles to play, and I commend them for their hard work and input. I must emphasise that it is not all work and no play... we do have lots of fun, which Jane Fields is bringing to our members more than ever before with more frequent networking evenings.

Finally, I would like to thank the members for their trust in me to chair the board on their behalf.