

PESA FEDERAL PRESIDENT REPORT

Year Ended 31 December 2023

I would first like to thank the membership for allowing me the privilege of my presidency. I have served PESA in a number of roles over the years, but they were all practice in the run up to the challenging role I have been entrusted. It is a time of great change in the industry and a time where I feel that my successes and failures as a leader will have a genuine effect on the trajectory of the society for decades to come.

In the changing environment in which we operate, PESA has struggled through the last decade with its financial resilience, and while we have not managed to return our coffers to the levels of 2013, we have wrestled our losses under control and you will see from the treasurer's report that 2023 ended with an acceptable surplus.

As in many previous years the big successes of 2023 were technical and educational. The short courses PESA ran and partnered in kept us true to our mission to provide continuing education for the benefit of our members. It is the case now, more than ever, that for a full and successful career within our industry our members need to be adaptable and able to use their skills in ways they never anticipated while at university. So, the target audience of the training courses PESA runs has metamorphosed from recent graduates to a much more mature demographic, keen to upskill and maintain relevance.

2023 saw the success of the AEGC conference hosted in Brisbane, with a packed-out technical program showcasing the work of our members. The success of the conference can be attributed to the hardworking committee in Brisbane led by Melanie Fitzell. The success of this conference (\$71,407.18) contributed significantly to our healthy financial situation for the year.

While the conferences and courses might be the big-ticket items, what really keeps PESA going is the continued efforts of our state branches and their committees, that keep the lifeblood events of PESA going. The diversification of events away from the standard technical lunch of the previous decade shows a willingness to engage in meeting the needs of our members, and the inspiration of our branch committees to conceive new formats. Field trips, core viewings, special interest groups and social events are just a few of the things our branch committees have managed to run in addition to technical talks. I cannot stress enough how indebted we are at PESA to the hard work of the volunteers at the branch level who make this possible, and I encourage all members to consider how they can contribute, whether that is joining your branch committee, offering to give a talk, or writing an article for publication, or even as little as taking the time to thank the people who organised an event you attended and enjoyed. Unlike several other industry societies PESA is fully volunteer run, and in a time where finding volunteers is harder than ever, we must cherish the effort they put in to keep this society running.

Our membership levels have stayed steady, with 1045 members at the start of 2023 and 1034 members at the end. 2024 membership numbers do not appear to have been impacted by the decision by the Membership Committee and the Board to raise the membership fees for 2024 renewals. The membership fee had remained fixed since 2018, firstly due to financial uncertainties at that time for many of our members, and then due to the pandemic. But costs

of so many aspects of what we do have been increasing steadily through this time, especially, but not limited to insurance costs, administration, and web hosting etc. Most importantly though, our membership fees had gradually slipped out of line with some of our closely associated societies with whom we run joint events, and this had become a bone of contention when executing MOUs for joint events. With membership fees for ASEG, AIG, AAPG and SPE all sitting around the A\$200 pricetag, they were struggling to extend reciprocal agreements to a society where membership was so much cheaper. This was especially true for the AEGC conference, where the discount for being a member is significantly greater than the cost of signing up for membership. With the new membership fees of A\$165 we are still one of the best value for money society memberships. And the membership committee has been working hard to make sure that the value keeps increasing by adding new benefits, and the growing library of accessible webinars is an important part of that.

For those of you who read PESA News, and especially any of you who take any notice of the President's column contained therein, you may be aware of the difficult decisions that have been going on throughout 2023 and continuing now, relating to the future of PESA News. The readership of the magazine in its current online pdf format has not been high, and it has been determined that for the price we pay for its production, this is not constituting value for money for our members. Much discussion has been had by the Publications Committee and the Board, and also with the floor opened up to all members to provide their feedback on this issue. And the decision has been reached to retire PESA News altogether and replace it with a new format PESA Gazette. The limited-edition hardcopy magazine produced for distribution from the PESA stand at the AEP conference will be the last of its kind. Its replacement, the PESA Gazette will come in the form of a monthly digest email with icons and introductions to the articles that can be clicked through to read in full, from the PESA website/technical library. We hope to keep a similar (or even improved) diversity of articles as were previously included in PESA News, but presented more regularly in a more accessible format. For the remainder of 2024 the Gazette will be populated and managed by our existing magazine editor, however we are seeking to appoint a Gazette editor from within the ranks of the membership to coordinate the submission of articles from our members and manage the on-time delivery of this newsletter. If you or someone you know has the energy and skills to undertake this role, do let us know. Once 2025 rolls around we will be entirely running PESA Gazette with articles solely by members for members.

In summary, 2023 was a year of successes, challenges, and hard decisions. But the Board have pulled together well and managed everything that presented itself. I would like to extend special thanks to Phil Cooney, who has chaired the Publications Committee for many years, and has put in a huge amount over the last year especially related to the changes to PESA News. Also thanks to Chris Watts, our Treasurer who has kept a steady hand on the financial tiller, and chaired the Finance and Governance Committee so effectively. To Janny Spilsbury-Schakel, our Vice President, who has chaired the Membership Committee this last year, and done great research related to our membership fee increase. Bronwyn Camac has presided over the Education committee which continues to deliver on our education aims and also manage to do so while making a surplus.

But the biggest thank you of all needs to go to Steve Mackie, our Chairman, who is stepping down at this AGM, after having 5 years as Chairman, almost directly after having served the 6 year term associated with the presidency. Many of us on the Board have never known a

Board without Steve, and his calm guidance. Steve has been a huge help to me in my role as President, supporting me and mentoring me all along. He will be sorely missed.

However, I am very excited to be welcoming Elinor Alexander to the Board. She steps into Steve's shoes from this AGM, and I am very excited to see how the next year will pan out, with someone with such experience and insight guiding us along.

Helen Debenham
Federal President