

## **REPORT ON NZPA CONFERENCE HELD IN TAUPO – 2010**

Yet again I am a bit late on putting together this report on our 2010 Conference but time flies – as they say – so better late than never.

This year we had a change of timing for the Conference. For many years we have had registration at 5pm on the Tuesday with the Conference ending at noon on the following Friday. It had become apparent to us that a large number of delegates were not attending the Friday morning sessions for one reason or another and this was causing a great deal of embarrassment to the Committee. As a result we decided to start the Conference with registration at 1pm on the Tuesday and finishing straight after breakfast on the Friday. This worked very well so it is something we will continue at the next Conference, which will also be held in Taupo.

It was lovely to meet up with so many familiar faces from around the country and to see quite a few new ones coming along. At 3pm His Worship the Mayor of Taupo, Mr Rick Cooper officially opened our Conference, and gave us a bit of a talk about the direction that Taupo is taking in the future with the new highway, the switch to Meter Eye for parking control and the development that is to be expected. (The highway has now been completed and the traffic passing the Wairakei Resort has dropped considerably with many of the trucks bypassing that stretch of road). After the opening by the Mayor, Janice gave her report and this was followed by some of the trade exhibitors giving us a talk on their products.

At 5.30pm we all gathered in the bar ready to get on a bus that was to take us just a short stretch down the road to the Huka Prawn Park. For those of you who have never been there before, it is well worth a visit. I believe it is known as the Prawn Fishing Capital of the World. We arrived to find beers and wine laid out on the bar ready for our enjoyment and we were then told that if we wanted to eat prawns for dinner we had to fish for them! Luckily it was a beautiful balmy evening so it was very pleasant to be gathered around one of the large ponds that are absolutely teeming with prawns. All fishing equipment was provided, including the bait, and some instructions were given on how to catch a prawn. A lot of the delegates were very lucky and caught several prawns each, but the author didn't manage to catch one. I had the help of Shayne and John from Christchurch too but to no avail. I thought I was going to go hungry!

As it happened we had plenty of food to eat – lots of prawns of course, but there were selections of other forms of protein for those that didn't fancy eating a prawn. The general consensus of all the delegates was that the trip to the Prawn Farm was well worth the experience and lots of fun and laughter was had while we attempted to 'fish for our supper'.

The following morning we started the conference 'proper' with some amazing speakers, a workshop on various issues faced by all Local Authorities, and talks and displays from the Trade Exhibitors that attended the Conference.

During that day Bryre Patchell from the District Courts spoke to us about the future direction of the 'Collections Department'. Bryre has a particular way of turning a

rather dry subject into something that suddenly becomes very interesting so he was able to keep everyone wanting to hear more.

Detective Inspector (ret) Graham Bell, the presenter of the popular show Police Ten 7 talked to us about ways of communicating with the media, presenting, and also told us about some of the interesting things that had occurred to him while serving with the Police Force. His presentation was excellent, amusing, entertaining and very informative.

After lunch we had the pleasure of hearing Tony Christiansen - one of the world's leading inspirational speakers. He is very humorous, bold and straight talking. He told us how he never allowed the loss of his legs to stop him from doing anything he ever wanted to do. He certainly gave us an insight of what can be achieved with determination, belief in ones self and a desire to accept the challenges that life puts in the way.

Our other keynote speaker was John Van Horn, who is the founder, editor and publisher of the Parking Today magazine and also publisher of the Parking World magazine which is specific to Australia and New Zealand. His talk was about Donald Shoup's "Cost of Free Parking" - the for's and against of the method. I am not sure that we all fully understood, or agreed with the methodology of it, but John was very entertaining.

Brad Dannefaerd came along on Thursday to talk to us about "Dress Etiquette on the Street". Brad is a very popular speaker at our conferences as he 'tells it like it is'. Being in the enforcement industry himself, he is well aware of what we face on a day to day basis so his exercises and examples mean so much more than a 'Kiwihost' course! This time he spoke about the importance of having the right uniform and how it can instil pride in a group and be functional at the same time.

During the rest of the conference we heard very interesting talks from Andrea Heazlewood, Joy Hamer, Bob Gibson, Hugh Hanna and Stephen Quinn of Phillips Fox. The subjects they spoke about are the bread and butter of our jobs; access to the motor vehicle data base, the qualification that a parking warden can achieve, changes within Land Transport New Zealand and impending changes to legislation. The removal of the Transport Act 1962 is quite major as is the removal of the Transport (Vehicle and Driver Registration and Licensing) Act 1986. The 'Long Act' will be condensed down to become Part 17 of the Land Transport Act 1998. It is all very exciting stuff but we need to be kept on our toes and make sure we make the changes as they occur - or get caught with egg on our faces! Stephen Quinn also referred to recent case law which is very relevant to our line of work.

Senior Sergeant Fane Troy of the Taupo Police also came to give us a talk on "How Taupo reduced the road toll". I don't think any of us that were there can forget his presentation. I also don't think that there was anyone in the room that was not affected by it in some way either. I am sure we all thought about his presentation as we left Taupo to drive home the next day.

On a lighter vein, there is a great deal to be learnt from the networking that goes on, especially over a social drink or two. Some Local Authorities have quite a different approach to a parking problem and that method is always worth a try when back on home ground. We all had a lot of fun on the Wednesday night after dinner with the entertainment being ITS's version of 'It's in the Bag'. Andrew and his team did a great job and a few people ended up with some nice prizes.

The AGM was held on Thursday at the end of the day's programme. The only change to the Executive Committee was the election of Steven May and the resignation of Bryan Crewe. Bryan will be retiring in March and will be sadly missed by all of us within the NZ Parking Association, but especially by his fellow committee members. Bryan's recent role as Treasurer will now be undertaken by Alison Ngamoki.

The conference dinner was held on Thursday evening with lots of people getting into the spirit of dressing up with an 'E' (Enforcement) or 'T' (Technology) theme. Some of our delegates have some amazing imaginations! There are quite a few guys who actually look really good when they put on their dresses, high heels and make-up. They put the rest of the ladies to shame!

After breakfast on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October we all began saying 'Farewell till next year' having renewed friendships and made new ones and always hoping that we will each be around for the next Conference!

We had distributed an evaluation form for all delegates to complete as this gives your Executive Committee an idea of what was good, not so good, or could be improved upon for the following Conference. Unfortunately we only received 23 completed forms but those 23 participants rated the Conference as being a success with little or no negative responses given.

The Committee is already beginning to plan the Conference for 2011, which will again be held in Taupo at the Wairakei Resort. Just remember that we had to change the dates because of the World Cup Rugby – it will be in November next year – but I am sure that it will be as big a success as we have had every other year. If there is any speaker or topic that you would like to hear, please inform the Executive Committee and, if it is feasible, we will see what can be done. We would love some input from you – after all, it is your Conference!

Jean Douglas  
On behalf of your Committee