

President's Report for 2009

The AGM and Annual Reception were held on Friday 3rd April 2009. This was a great celebration of 30 years for AFAS-Vic and was held at Eildon Mansion, the Alliance Française premises in St Kilda. Special presentations were made to a full house of 60 members and guests by 2008 fellowship recipient, Dr Adrian Orifici and followed by an AFAS-Vic retrospective by John Acton. The celebration culminated with a cocktail function enjoyed by all attendees. A great success and some ventured to say the best AGM ever!

The current Office Holders are:

- President: Peter Tolé
- Vice President: Francois Malherbe
- Secretary: Philippe Lesage
- Treasurer: George Bolz
- Public Officer: Bernard Shepherd.

Ordinary members are: John Acton, Richard Ferrero, Nicholas Garnham, Yvonne Durandet, Garry Peters, David Phillips, Leigh Peterson, Susan Patrick, Sebastien Fleury.

On 19th of May 2009, following the prior commitment made to hold a special event in order to encourage increased participation from a wider body of under-graduates, students and past Fellows, a special function was held at the Alliance Française. A cheese and wine evening was organised in keeping with the guest speaker's theme: *The Science and Technology of Wine – An introduction to Sparkling Winemaking* by Loic Le Calvez, Chief Winemaker & Chief Operating Officer of Taltarni Vineyards and Clover Hill.

Philippe Lesage excelled himself once more with his choice of restaurant for our 20th June Annual Dinner at **The French Corner Restaurant**. Again a large number of members attended and were treated to such culinary delights as traditional Gascon garlic soup for entrée, Cassoulet Toulousain, the **French Corner's** signature dish for main course and French cheese platter all accompanied by French wines from the Loire and Rhône valleys. A mouth watering delight!

In conjunction with FEAST-France, AFAS Victoria awarded three AFAS FEAST-France Fellowships in 2009 to Victorian researchers wishing to undertake a study tour to France. These fellowships were granted as a complement to the Victoria Fellowships awarded by DIIRD. It marked the sixth year of the AFAS/FEAST-France Fellowship. They number a total of 17 to date. The function was held on 7th August at a magnificent venue overlooking the Melbourne night sky from the Investment Centre on level 46 of 55 Collins Street.

This year the three post-doctoral researchers awarded a grant of up to \$5000 each were:

- Dr Joanne Devlin, a veterinarian and lecturer in veterinary public health and epidemiology at the University of Melbourne who is researching new methods to control and prevent animal disease;
- Dr Sally Gras whose fellowship will take her to industrial and research centres in Ireland, the United Kingdom, France and Norway to learn about advances in the understanding and control of dairy product microstructure and progress in functional food research (She hopes her fellowship will build Victoria's capability in this area, ensuring that the Victorian dairy industry remains internationally competitive by boosting quality, decreasing waste and decreasing risk associated with manufacture);
- Dr Martin Leahy who is furthering the understanding of how to store carbon dioxide safely, which is particularly important for Victoria given much of the world's current dependence on brown coal for electricity generation.

President's Report – Continued

The awards were presented by Michel Thibier, the Scientific Counsellor from the French Embassy in what was his last official function before returning to France at the end of his three year posting in Australia.

Our penultimate event for the year was on 3rd October which saw an organised visit to view the application of French technology at **Austral Bricks**. French company **Céric** deigned and installed the brickworks kiln among other process equipment. This was to be the final project for Pierre Rodriguez (AFAS member) in Australia prior to retirement. The technical visit was followed by a social picnic at picturesque Yan Yean Reservoir in Melbourne's north.

Our main seminar was held on 12th November 2009 under the title of: *Energy & Sustainability Questions*. The speakers and specific questions addressed by each were as follows:

- Prof. Kerry Pratt from the Monash Sustainability Institute
 - *Energy: State of the Art – What are the Alternatives?*
- Dr Selena Ng from AREVA
 - *Nuclear Energy – Does it fit?*
- Dr John Andrews from RMIT University
 - *Solar Energy – What use is it?*
- Julien Gaschignard from HydroTas, Victoria
 - *Wind – Is it reliable?*
- Chris Tehan from Evans & Peck
 - *An Energy User's Perspective – How is transport addressing sustainability?*

The Committee would like to thank Michel Thibier for his vigorous support, Sylvie Christophe; Cultural & Cooperation Attaché, Patrice Pauc of the Alliance Française and Patricia Polites the Honorary French Consul for their contributions to AFAS-Vic and its activities. I would also like to thank the members of the Committee of Management, Liaison Officers and you, the members, for your loyalty in 2009.

Peter Tolé

February 2010