

# NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## Back to the Future



Theming a packaging conference is always difficult. It starts and ends with a small but passionate group of packaging people locked away in a chat-room after making several careful studies of the latest Stelvin closure and wine bottles, noticing that in fact they really are getting lighter every year. Of course the goal is to produce a snag line that captures the ethos and topical touch points in the industry at the time.

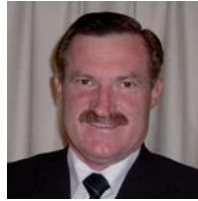
'Back to the Future – The Art & Science of Packaging' was coined to reflect the superb array of developments in packaging today while encouraging packaging technologists not to forget the fundamentals and especially the science of their art. Fast paced with a wide coverage, the AIP's signature biennial event in June will bring together a strong line up of speakers from Australia and around the globe. We will also take the opportunity to welcome a delegation from the World Packaging Organisation for the first time in support of the AIP's undertaking to join the WPO and begin to participate on the world stage among like-minded professional member bodies. The Conference will be held at the historic Melbourne Cricket Ground, a highly regarded convention destination, and I think that delegates will embrace the fantastic surrounds to make the event very memorable.



On other fronts I am pleased to report that the AIP will continue this year with providing two scholarships toward the Certificate in Packaging for a student enrolled in the PCA Southern Cross Awards and Cormack Innovation Awards programs. These scholarships complement the Australian Packaging and Processing Machinery Association initiative to provide a scholarship for the Diploma in Packaging Technology course again for the second year running and combined, they represent a real opportunity for a person either in the packaging industry or a student with interest in packaging to obtain a significant qualification. Time will tell, however winners of the 2009 awards are progressing nicely and I think that this bodes well for the future availability of skilled people.

Our Annual General Meeting this year will be held in conjunction with Conference on the night before opening plenary and I look forward to reporting in more detail on the operations of the Institute. Highlights include the formalisation of the AIP organisational structure which features the use of part time personnel in the various portfolios drawn from organisations related to, and passionate about, the industry, the result being that the AIP is able to operate with the depth and skill set of a large organisation but on a smaller budget. We continue to enjoy strong support from sponsors, speakers and the AIP 'doers' who give their time to underpin the organisations future and deserve our thanks for making the wheels turn.

The National Conference will also mark my time to step down as National President of the AIP after being in the chair for what seemed to be two very quick years. I will welcome into the role the current Vice President Pierre Pienaar who will do a fabulous job as President as he has done in all of his previous executive roles with the Institute nationally and at branch level and beforehand in his native country South Africa where he was also an office bearer for many years. Pierre's long standing involvement in education as a tutor both here and in SA will embody the AIP forward toward our primary objective of professional development, learning and opportunities for packaging technologists.



For my part, it has been a privilege to have served and I extend my thanks to the national and branch executives for their assistance and support. It has been a great journey, witness to education programs for Nestle and Diageo as part of a return to corporate training programs delivered by the AIP – something which I implore other companies to embrace. The successful '½ day' training programs are back and we now have 3 scholarship programs running with 2 funded by the AIP. We have put the day-to-day operations of the AIP onto a more 'business-like' footing and instilled strong succession planning at both branch and national levels.

Strategic relationships with the PCA, APPMA and AIFST have been re-established and built in the hope of many years cooperation, and the new involvement with the WPO will assist the internationalisation of the AIP as a professional body. New branches were added in South Australia and New Zealand. However, perhaps my greatest pleasure was that the board initiated the 25 Year Membership Award to recognise (in most cases many years overdue) the long-standing commitment that many packaging technologists have made to the industry around them through their Institute.

Like any organisation, the AIP will have its challenges and opportunities going forward. Some of the horizon points will include managing the continued growth of the Institute within the existing part-time environment; dealing with the proposed improvements to the Certificate & Diploma courses; securing further investment in corporate wide training; accommodating the demand for PAYG bite-size training packages & modules with build up accreditation; and, participating on a world stage. However, I think that the Institute is well placed to answer these calls and I encourage any member with an interest to make an approach to their local branch to participate.

So in closing, I extend my invitation to the AIP National Conference and look forward to a bright outlook for our AIP and I hope, for the packaging industry as a whole. See you in June!



**Craig Wellman MAIP**  
National President