



8. General business

The president issued the following written statement:

We live in a democracy. It makes Australia one of the luckiest countries in the world. Democracies do not occur naturally – they must be constructed and nurtured and monitored in case things start going astray.

There are rules that make democracies work, and within those rules are protections to stop small vocal factions from undermining the people who are tasked with, or who have taken on the task of, executing "due process" as part of the democratic system.

This year the majority of the Cardwell Chamber's committee members took on the task of managing the association's operations in accordance with its constitution and ultimately with the Queensland Incorporated Associations Act which has overriding power. That is what "due process" is all about.

If the committee had been using Chamber funds to sip pina colodas around the swimming pools of Caribbean cruise ships, it would be understandable for members to be outraged and demand 'heads on sticks'. But when committee members are dedicated to doing the right thing, and to do so publicly and in consultation with the Queensland Office of Fair Trading, the recent outrage expressed by a tiny minority has been seen for what it is – the views of a disgruntled few whose unfortunate personal traits compel them to be heard and seen at all costs.

Under threat of legal action and media shaming, the current management team has endured more than any volunteer of any age should encounter during their terms of service to the members and the community. So on behalf of the Chamber's present committee, I sincerely thank the silent majority of Chamber members who overwhelmingly have spoken out in support for the democratic system that we all live within ... by being silent.

Can I say that the present team of committee members is the most loyal and outstandingly professional of all I have had the pleasure of serving with in recent times. Should they wish to dedicate their volunteer time to another association, I commend all of them to their next membership body.

What now for the Cardwell Chamber of Commerce? It could fold, and there is a proper procedure for doing so and distributing its funds and assets to a worthwhile and deserving cause. It could sit for a while, in stasis, contemplating its past and its future. It could be renamed to remove some of the recent stigma and bounce back as a new association for the Cardwell area. Or it could merge or amalgamate with another association. These are all viable options and need good people to act on with the advice of the Office of Fair Trading for firm guidance.

I wish everyone well and a bright and enjoyable future for the Cardwell area. Every bit you can do to achieve that is a positive.