President’s address to the 2013 AGM of the West Aviat Golf Club

Good evening and welcome to all our members. 2013 has been another good year for the West Aviat Golf Club. We have experienced steady growth in new members from right across the age groups, which is encouraging.

However, I note with sadness the passing away of Eddie Rutherford - one of our Life Members, Phil Gilbert and Jerry Hemy during the year. I am pleased to say that several West Aviat members were present at each funeral.

I can also report that the Club was able to send appropriate cards or wishes to a number of members who were suffering or had suffered serious health setbacks.

After a year of major changes last year, we have seen some consolidation with the bedding down of the Golflink Autoscore system – not withstanding some technical hiccups along the way! - and enjoyed reasonable success for all those members who have participated in the various WAGL events throughout the year. Some 40 odd members played in the Pennants competition for the first time and although not successful, thoroughly enjoyed their experience.

I am very pleased to commend the work of our tournament committee for the efforts that have been directed towards organising the Club’s first Open Day since removing to Hillview. It is fitting that it coincides with our 40th Anniversary. Well done to Gary Hughes, Ray Mayne and the others who have helped to raise sponsorships for the event. It appears that we already have a full field, thanks in part to our membership of the WAGL, and can only trust that the weather is favourable on the day.

At last year’s AGM, I asked you to approve the trial membership of WAGL on the basis that it would provide three main benefits for club members, these were:- Firstly, that it would retain for the club a level of representation with the National and State bodies that control Golf in Australia after the loss of our delegates due the change in status from a “B” Class club to now be a “Public Course Club”; Second, that it would allow our members to take part in a number of tournaments and a Pennants tournament that had previously been denied us; and thirdly, that it opened up communication channels for improved social and competitive interaction with other similar clubs both at Hillview and other Public Courses around the Metropolitan area. The only real negative was the initial membership cost of $15 per head per year. I can report that this has now
been reduced to $10 per head per year and that 2014 West Aviat membership fees will remain unchanged from this year. After some discussion your Committee was in general agreement that the club did and would continue to benefit from WAGL membership and recommended that the West Aviat Golf Club continues to be a member club in the West Australian Golf League. You will be asked to formally endorse this recommendation later.

I am pleased to report that we have enjoyed a continuing good relationship with Michael Long the General Manager of the Hillview Public Golf Course, and look forward to the steady improvements that we have and are witnessing.

I can report that Michael Long has agreed to authorize the West Aviat Golf Club to use a local rule to allow ‘Preferred Lies’ on all fairways, and ‘Lift, Smooth and place’ in bunkers in order to help preserve the course and ensure fair play. The final wording of these local rules is still to be determined by the Club Captain and the Committee.

I’d like to clarify the legal situation with regard to timing of this AGM being in compliance with the Constitution, as a member has quite rightly raised the matter of the requirement to hold an AGM within 4 months of the end of the financial year and hold one each year. This anomaly has arisen due to the change of our financial year from July to June 2012/13 to now be Jan to Dec 2013. The Club Secretary has consulted with the West Australian Department of Corporate Affairs, who has confirmed that we are correct in holding an AGM now – approximately 12 months since the last one, but that we shall also have to hold another one in March/April 2014 and yearly from then on to comply with the Constitutional requirements.

When I took on the task of Club President 2 years ago, I did so on the understanding that a 2 year tenure was the optimum, although there is no real precedent or guidance provided in the Constitution. Obviously if no other candidate had presented himself, I would have continued to offer my services in this capacity; however Terry Geraghty has nominated for the position so I will withdraw my own nomination and pass the baton to him.

I would like to thank all members of this year’s Committee and especially those who are retiring – Bill Ferguson and Mick Addington.

Special thanks must go to Loch Haynes – our Secretary, who has persevered through a year of personal torment and tragedy; to Peter Kilgour our Treasurer; to Graham Woodcock our Club Captain; to Gary Wenn our web master, and to
Geoff Sander our IT guru for their outstanding work during the year and for offering to continue in these vital roles for another 6 months.

I’d also like to make special mention of those who show up week in and week out to help with the tasks of Day captains and registration helpers at each of the weekly comps – Len Lane, Greg St Jack, Chris Lewis, Terry Geraghty, Merv Meehan, Ernie Mitchell, Ray Hawkins, Loch Haynes, Steve Harper, Gary Wenn, Mike Connolly, Chris Johnson, Al McPhail, and Wayne Eberhart. Without you the comps would not run smoothly – Thank you.

Finally, I’d like to thank you all for your support during the last 2 years – it has been an honour and privilege to be your President.

Bill Birkbeck
President
27th October 2013.