

# Ghanaians Queensland

Ghana Australia Association of Queensland Inc.

## Annual Report 2013-14

## President's report

In my first year as President of Ghanaians Queensland, I started with a lot of high hopes to deliver many new initiatives and make some improvements to functions of the association that we have long recognised as needing some attention. Twelve months later, I am filled with mixed feelings because we did a lot of good but many more opportunities to do better were missed.

One of the most difficult parts of this term was managing several resignations from the association, including the Vice President, Treasurer and Women's Coordinator, and not being able to appoint someone to the Community Relations Officer position. This means the Management Committee was reduced to three people, limiting our capacity to deliver on the agenda we set for ourselves and the community this year.

While this was a contributing factor, I believe there was still a lot more we could have done, and remain disappointed that we didn't deliver; especially around the women's program, our full events program, governance, engaging regional Ghanaians, community engagement and showcasing Ghanaians culture to the wider community. While we did better than last year in our membership outcomes, we fell short of my promised target of 100 new memberships. Perhaps it was too ambitious but I think it is still achievable.

As is the many priorities we wanted to deliver in the Agenda Statement and Events Program we outlined at the beginning of this term. The key for the President and the Management committee will be engaging more in the community to support us to deliver. I have been hearted by those who have been and continue to be great association helpers. There are more out there and we need to do a better job of reaching out to them.

There were good outcomes this year that I am proud of, including consistently delivering the Talking Drum newsletter, finally updating our website, establishing the youth group, sorting out our financial governance and literally bringing it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, developing the association's first ever Agenda Statement. We also delivered the End of Year celebrations, Independence Day event and had a great presence at the Africa Day Festival.

I would like to thank Martha Mansah and especially Jenny Carruthers for their support this year on the Management Committee. I also want to thank Christine Larbi-Bram and Ernestina Affum for their work on the youth group. There are many other people who helped with our events and activities throughout the year and I thank you all for your support and efforts. We will continue to rely on this support and commitment into the future.

Next year, as we celebrate 20 years since this wonderful association began, I hope to do better for Ghanaians Queensland to make it a great year; worthy of the longevity and achievements that many have delivered in the years beforehand for the Ghanaian community.

**Akua Afriyie Ahenkorah**

## Community communication

### Website

We finally updated our website, after two years of neglect, providing a new and professional online platform to engage the wider community and provide information about the association and our activities. In just one month, the website has had over 1000 individual visits. We hope to keep developing the website and make it livelier.

### Talking Drum

For the first time in a long time, we have had a year of sending out a Talking Drum newsletter every month, most of them - on time. Figures from our email service shows good open rates for the newsletter. However there are a lot of people in the community still not receiving the newsletter or other communications from the association and this is an area that can be improved by expanding the distribution list. It is currently at 200 emails. Another way of improving the newsletter, is incorporating more community news into it.

We also launched the Drumbeat Blog, which is a great way for people to start conversations about some of the important and interesting topics in the community and back in Ghana. With Talking Drum well established this year. Growing Drumbeat will be a focus for next year.

### Facebook

Our Facebook page was once again the most active and engaging communication platform for the community online, with our friends growing to over 500, It continues to be a great way to engage young members of the community and share news, pictures and videos about activities in Queensland and back in Ghana.

### Twitter account

We set up a twitter account for the association. However this is a platform that most in the community are not as engaged in so it has not grown as rapidly as our other online platforms. However, it has been a good way to connect with opinion leaders and community leaders in Queensland Multicultural communities, and bring some of our initiatives to their attention. We will continue to develop our presence and how we can use this channel more effectively.

## Supporting the community

### Supporting students

This year, we again supported our graduating students with the President and other community members attending ceremonies to cheer on and honour their achievements. We also made contact with the International Offices of the three major universities and provided the association details as a way of helping connect more Ghanaian international students to the association. This has been somewhat successful but on-the-ground feedback shows that a lot of students take a while to connect to the association, if at all. There is a need to have an even more proactive approach to engaging newly arriving Ghanaians.

### Women's programs

One of our priorities for 2014 was to establish a women's program. We held a planning meeting in March to begin the process. While there were many great activities, this initiative and the planned activities did not get off the ground this year for several reasons. This has been one of the unfulfilled agendas for this year and for the association in general. It will be reviewed in 2015 and with the right support, restart the process to achieve this.

### Football team support

The Ghana Football Team continued their participation in several tournaments, including the Cultural Diversity Week Football Tournament, the Queensland Police Community Shield, the World Refugee Day Football Tournament and the African Football Association Tournament. The team also turned up to participate in the Fun in the Park activity during Easter. The association's support of the football team and engaging the Ghanaian community to be part of the team and go along to support the team at their games is one major issue that arose this year. The President meet with the team and coach to begin the process of bridging this gap and this will also be a focus for 2015.

## Young Ghanaians

### Establishing Ghanaians youth group

Our youth group was established this year – Young Ghanaians Queensland. The group held a BBQ event in April during National Youth Week, and set up a Facebook page. Establishing the group was an important milestone, after being long promised for a few years. Its activities were minimal and the Management Committee will focus on supporting the youth leaders to grow the group and its activities.

One of the highlights of the year was two young Ghanaians being recognised for their achievements at the Young African Australian Star Awards. Naa Adjeley Sackey won the Academic Excellence Award in the Secondary School category for her outstanding academic achievement throughout high school, achieving an OP 2, and for her community work. Christine Larbi-Bram was Highly Commended in the Leadership category for her leadership of QUT African Association and other community work she does at Uni and the African community.

## Events

### End of year celebrations

One of our longest running traditions, our End of Year celebrations, was one of the best attended for a few years. The Acting Ghana High Commissioner and Ghana Honorary Consulate in Sydney join us for the celebrations.

### Independence Day Celebrations

This year's Independence Day theme was Kofi ne Ama, celebrating the unique naming traditions across Ghana. Held during International Women's Day, we took the opportunity to celebrate all the fantastic women in our community who have been actively contributing to the association over recent years.

### Easter fun in the Park

Our new tradition of the Easter Fun in the Park continued, with a fun football game over the Easter long weekend. This event continued to be popular and was well attended by the community.

### Africa Day Festival

With better planning this year, our presence at the Africa Day Festival was a great success, with the Ghana Chop Bar proving very popular and most of the food selling out. Our country stall was also well visited throughout the day. We were again the only community to hold both a country stall and food stall. Between the two stalls, we made a good profit for the association's finances and showcased our food and cultural wares to the community. We will definitely be there for the 2015 festival.

## Community representation

The President represented the community at many multicultural events and activities throughout the year, including the Queensland Government's Cultural Diversity Policy consultation, African

community meetings, African Women's Dinner and the Mandela Day event.

## Administration

### Frist ever Agenda Statement

The Management Committee developed the first Agenda Statement for the association and revised the association's vision and mission. Our revised vision of "*Ghanaians Queensland - a great community because everyone is part of it*" is about engaging the community into all part of the association's activities and ensuring that the association is equally engaged and having a positive impact in the community and the lives of our members.

Our agenda was focused on increasing our membership through our membership drive, improving our welcome program for new Ghanaians in Queensland, better engaging the community, establishing a youth and women's program, improving our events program, the association's governance, fundraising, communication and Ghanaian culture in the wider Queensland community. We succeeded in delivering on some of these priorities, made inroads with others and unfortunately didn't begin or achieve some of these. Our successes or otherwise are outlined in this annual report. All these priorities continue to be relevant to the association into the future and next year presents another opportunity to tackle these initiatives.

### Management Committee

The Management Committee met five times during this term to plan activities and discuss community issues. This was in addition to regular email and phone discussion about association and community matters. This year, several of the elected Management Committee members resigned due to personal

circumstances and work commitments. This reduced the Management Committee to the President, Secretary and Events Officer for most of the year, making the administration of the association difficult.

### Association membership

We had a better outcome with membership take up this year, compared to previous years. Our membership intake doubled from last year, coming in at \$1056. This was due to a more proactive approach to seeking new members and renewals of current memberships through the '*Be part of it*' membership drive campaign. We had 23 new memberships since the last AGM. This is a good improvement. However, well short of the 100 target set at the beginning of this term. There is still a lot of room for improvement. We will continue this campaign next year, restart the count and aim to secure more memberships in 2015.

### Financial changes

We made changes to the association bank account to make it easier to use and allow us to take advantage of current financial technologies. Our account was set up in the 1990s as cheque-based, required two signatories for all withdrawals and did not have electronic funds transfer (EFT) or internet banking facilities.

This limited the functionality of the account for the President and Treasurer to manage the bank, pay bills and reimburse Management Committee members for expenditure.

The account was changed to have EFT facility, single signatory banking and internet banking to ensure accountability and to meet auditing requirements; we developed a financial protocol for the association. This change in March made financial management of the a lot easier than in previous years.

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Starting financial position (a)	\$2,034.05
Overall Income	\$5,856.00
Overall expenditure	\$5,273.20
Overall profit	\$582.76
Cash at bank as at 25/10/2014	\$4,817.98
Funds to be reimbursed (b)	\$2,548.20
<b>Current financial position (c)</b>	<b>\$2,269.78</b>
Net profit (d)	\$235.73
<b>Income</b>	
Membership	\$1,056.00
End of Year Party	\$1,403.00
Independence Day Celebration	\$1,546.10
Africa Day Festival	\$1,520.90
GQ merchandise	\$330.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$5,856.00</b>
<b>In kind donations</b>	<b>\$1,342.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
End of year celebration	\$1,279.10
Independence Day celebration	\$1,558.89
Easter Fun in the Park	\$248.39
Africa Day Festival	\$762.10
Administration	\$394.00
Miscellaneous	\$994.72
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,237.20</b>

### Notes

- This is the funds we had at the beginning of the new Management Committee in October 2013
- This is funds that Management Committee members have spent on events and activities that needs to be reimbursed
- This is funds the association will have in the bank once the reimbursements are made
- This is based on comparing the starting financial position to the current financial position