



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

Roger Scott
Executive Director
TJRyan Foundation

I am pleased to present my first report on the activities of the TJ Ryan Foundation. The Foundation had its official launch on 20 February 2014. The concept of a think tank that could contribute to the public policy debate in Queensland was first proposed in 2012 by the then State Opposition Leader Annastacia Palaszczuk in her Labour Day speech.

Less than a year later my appointment as the first TJ Ryan Foundation Executive Director was announced (immediately before Palaszczuk's 2013 Labour Day address). Subsequently, I undertook to recruit members to the Foundation, with the appointment of Board members progressing throughout 2013. Emeritus Professor Paul Boreham became Deputy Executive Director of the Board and then other Board members joined. We now have an 11-member Board which includes a number of current and past university academics with senior administrative experience and two representatives of the labour movement.

The Executive was set up over a similar time period. Mr John Ford was appointed Company Secretary, Mr Ron Monaghan became Treasurer, and Dr Ann Scott became the Research Co-ordinator. They were joined later by Ms Stephanie Serhan and Dr Donna Wicks to supplement social media support for the website. Dr Mary Crawford also served as an events organizer providing liaison with QUT.

In addition, we have continued to recruit Research Associates to the Foundation, and this category now exceeds 80. Research Associates can contribute in a number of ways; however they do so most visibly when providing research reports published in the name of the Foundation.

The Foundation became more prominent when its new website was developed. Throughout 2014, with the assistance of seed funding provided by the Queensland Council of Unions and ALP, *ToadShow*, a Brisbane based social media and design company, re-designed the site and has continued to provide technical support to the Foundation

The Foundation on 20 February 2014 was addressed by three Research Associates, two of whom were also Board members, supporting a keynote address presented by Dr David Solomon, at that time serving as Queensland's Integrity Commissioner. The launch was attended by over eighty people, including many who had agreed to serve as Research Associates. The Leader of the Opposition also attended, as did Dr Alex Douglas, representing at the time the Palmer United Party. Dr Solomon's speech was (mis)reported in the local media and was drawn to wider public attention when mentioned in his valedictory report.

The Foundation has now published 18 *Research Reports*, one of which (no.14) was long enough to be regarded as an e-monograph. It also 'curated' on its website numerous works by Research Associates which had appeared in other publications. Finally, it offered access to several hundred open access publications relating to its specific brief of contributing to the Queensland public policy debate.

Ann and I attended the national conference of the Australian Study of Parliament Group and also presented papers at a national conference of the Policy Studies Network in Canberra and an international conference on policy research in Ottawa. Attendance at these two events was personally funded, and did not draw on any financial support from the Foundation.

Although public gatherings were not part of the original brief of the Foundation, we were invited to host a 'Perspectives on Public Accountability' forum at Parliament House on 3 September 2014. Professor Paul Mazerolle was in the chair, and speakers were: the Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk, Leader of the Opposition; Mr Greg Chamberlin, former editor of the Courier Mail; Mr Peter Davis QC, former President of the Bar Association; Dr Paul Williams, School of Humanities, Griffith University; Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO, School of Science, Griffith University; and Adjunct Professor Ann Scott, Centre for the Government of Queensland, University of Queensland.

We also agreed to host a lunch on 16 January 2015 at which the Leader of the Opposition launched the e-monograph *Queensland 2014 : Political Battleground*. This was followed by the Shadow Treasurer launching the ALP's economic and fiscal strategic policy, as part of the election campaign.

An unanticipated activity resulted from an approach from the Australian Technology Education Network (based at the ANU), which organises study tours on behalf of the Chinese government. Roger Scott and John Ford addressed a delegation of local government officials from the NingXia province; Christine Flynn addressed HRM representatives of the General Office of the Communist Party; Dr Howard Guille addressed a group from the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Liaoning Province and Paul Newbury addressed a group from the State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of Chongqing City. Lecturers were employed directly on a fee-for-service basis and the Foundation facilitated access to teaching facilities at the University of Queensland.

I have been particularly heartened by the extent to which the Foundation has met its overall goal to contribute to the public policy debate in Queensland. This has been the result of the concerted efforts of a number of the Foundation's members who have volunteered their time and skills to further the Foundation's goals.

The challenge for the coming year is to maintain the momentum of contributions from Board members and from Research Associates. We recognize that the rewards system measuring productivity, and thus professional advancement, means that most Research Associates currently in university positions will prefer to publish their work initially in other publications before they appear on our web-site. Those from an older generation can make direct contributions to what is known technically in the information technology era as 'grey literature' (both Ann and I have the hair for it).

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