

Thinking Differently

Is it time to get back to the basics?

MARY ANNE MARR, SR/WA



Spending quality time visiting IRWA Chapters is one of the most rewarding parts of my role as International President. Comprised of members who share common bonds and goals, the local Chapter is an ideal place to form business relationships, partnerships and friendships. This is where we all work together on behalf of education and training, while sharing information that makes us better individually and collectively. These Chapter visits have given me an opportunity to see first-hand how belonging to a group of likeminded professionals has made a difference in the lives of our members.

As I visit some of our newer Chapters, I am reminded of the longstanding history of our North American Chapters, many of which

have celebrated their 50th Chapter anniversary. This got me thinking about what it might be like to form a new Chapter and what it would be like to belong to one that has yet to create its history.

Visionaries for the Profession

In considering some of our newest Chapters in Mexico, Australia, and most recently Saudi Arabia, I know how challenging it can be to form a new Chapter. It is especially daunting in those countries where there is a lack of real knowledge of who we are and what we do. Forming a Chapter requires some dedicated individuals with relentless desire, determination and commitment. These are the visionaries who believe in something

bigger than themselves. They too, want to learn, contribute and grow the recognition of our profession across the globe.

In 2016, we saw the formation of Australia's Chapter 86. This past November, I was invited to visit Australia with IRWA's CEO, Mark Rieck, to meet with governmental agencies and to partner with the chapter in building programs to support membership growth. During our visit, we had meetings with high-level government and private practice representatives. Our goal was to introduce the IRWA and to better understand current issues in Australia related to infrastructure development, land rights and property issues. We met with representatives



From left, Chapter 86 President John Woolley, Mary Anne, IRWA CEO Mark Rieck and Murray Sharpe, SR/WA.



Mary Anne with Martin Clapper, a founding member of the Australian Coal Seam Gas Council.



From left, John Woolley, Dr. Georgina Davis, Queensland Farmers Federation Policy Advisor, Mary Anne and Travis Tobin, Queensland Farmers Federation CEO.



Wayne Bartesko, SR/WA, receives special recognition as first Queensland Chapter 86 President and founding member.

from the Department of Transport & Main Roads, the Gas Fields Commission, the Department of Industry, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, the Queensland Farmers' Federation, the Australia Petroleum Production and Exploration Association and the Australian Property Institute.

The Australian Property Institute (API) held its first national conference, and we were able to meet with API's leadership team to explore opportunities for developing a strategic partnership. I was invited to present a session on "The Leading Role of Real Estate in Infrastructure Project Success," and the Chapter actively engaged the attendees and generated interest in membership by hosting an IRWA booth.

High Impact Growth

It is clear that Chapter 86 is on an upward path toward membership growth and increased influence and engagement within the industry.



Presenting a session to API Conference participants.



Mary Anne with Alan Hartley, Special Projects Manager and Paul Gelston, CEO of the South Australia Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

They are already developing their strategic plan and identifying key areas of focus that includes education, business development, stakeholder engagement, funding, regulations and standardization. Through the efforts of these extraordinary individuals, IRWA members everywhere will benefit through increased recognition, education and development of standards that all work to improve people's quality of life.

And I applaud some of our other new Chapters for their strategic and innovative thinking. Last year, our Mexico Chapter formed a university partnership, while our South Africa Chapter spearheaded a government accreditation program. In Saudi Arabia, in-house training was established for Saudi Aramco, and we are currently exploring a strategic partnership with the API in Australia.

A Fresh Approach

So what can we learn from our new Chapters? If your Chapter were brand new, who would you invite to your next meeting? Are there government agency leaders who might be receptive to attending? Are there some local companies whose employees would benefit from joining? These questions remind us that IRWA has so much to offer members and non-members alike. In our fast changing world, people are looking for ways to stay connected. Perhaps a fresh approach is needed to attract them.

As I reflect on my Chapter visits and their many accomplishments, I realize that regardless of where I am in the world, IRWA members are people who really do have an impact not just at a professional level, but personally as well. I encourage everyone to reach out to other professionals who would benefit from joining with us as we build a better world. ⚡



Mary Anne meets with IRWA member Paul Walker and New South Wales Department of Industry's Corrie Germin, Jason Scattolin and Diane Crosdale.