



## President's Report for 2018

The past year has been a busy one for the ASTC Committee, with much hard work to deliver services to our members; and to engage with industry to promote what we, as technical communicators, really do. Once again, the committee wasn't at full strength for the latter part of the term, due to the resignations of two valued members for personal circumstances. However, the rest of the committee continued onwards, working together as a cohesive team, even though geographically we are scattered across much of Australia.

One important event for the committee was the recent ASTC conference – it was an opportunity for the committee to meet face-to-face and further develop the relationships we've established through our online meetings and emails. It was a pleasant change to be able to look at each other across the meeting table for the brief meetings we had at the conference.

This year has been the first full year we've had the expert services of Karen our administrator, and the new accounting system (Xero) we transitioned to in July last year. I'm pleased to report that Xero has worked well, streamlining our banking and membership management, and minimising Karen's workload.

After several hiccups this year with the ongoing work developing our new website, I'm pleased to say that it has just been launched, and it is a big improvement on the old one, both in presentation and useability. It's still a work in progress with a few holes, but they will progressively be plugged in the coming weeks and months. To help us do that, we've called on our members to consider contributing content, such as presentations, training, white papers and case studies. Also under final development is a secure members only area.

Unfortunately like last year, we've had little success in promoting training to our members, either face-to-face or webinar sessions. We've previously canvassed our membership for ideas on what professional development you'd like to see but the couple of courses we've promoted have failed to attract enough participants for them to go ahead. So it's up to you, our members, to let us know what you'd like to see, and how you'd like to see it delivered – please let us know.

This year we held our conference for the first time on the Gold Coast. Good thing we were busy inside with an engaging range of speakers and presentations because the weather wasn't that appealing outside. Apart from having some new faces (in addition to the usual suspects) attend the conference, the conference venue was excellent, from the room and equipment itself to the great food and drinks offered at all the breaks. If you haven't attended an ASTC conference before, I can thoroughly recommend you consider doing so in the future. It is excellent value when compared to other conferences, and a great way to meet your peers from around the country and further afield. This year the mix of presentations was exceptionally high, and I consider it to be the best conference yet. The conference was also enhanced by a separate one-day workshop on the following Monday by Dave Gash, who treated the participants with an educational and entertaining learning experience.



A particular highlight for me was the Trivia Night following the conference dinner on the first night. This was hosted by Dave Gash and moderated (although I use this term advisedly) by Tony Self and provided all attendees with much entertainment and mirth. There was lots of bonding between team members and was a great opportunity to get to know other technical communicators on a social level. Although the conference numbers didn't meet our expectations, there was a good turnout of new participants. The conference subcommittee will be starting to look at suitable venues for 2019 in the very near future, but we will most likely consider returning to a capital city location.

During the conference we welcomed Katie Haggath, a committee member of our sister organisation TechCommNZ. Katie was our guest at the conference and we were able to hold some informal talks face-to-face during one of the breaks. This supplemented the periodic online meetings we hold with key TechCommNZ Committee members as we work to bring our respective organisations closer together.

The current ASTC Committee was formed at the 2017 AGM and included a couple of new people, supplemented by some 'old hands'. Throughout the year we've met on a monthly basis, with a steady email flow to support our activities, and have worked very effectively together as a cohesive team. Each and every one of these outstanding people has worked hard to ensure the ASTC keeps developing and growing, especially in keeping up with the times. Of course, our primary goal is to serve our technical communications community and promote technical communication in all its broad forms.

At the risk of singling out individual committee members, I want to acknowledge a few people who have delivered beyond normal expectations for volunteers. We can start with Janet Taylor who has once again delivered a very successful annual conference, having done so for many years. Our Secretary for this year has been a new committee member, David Stephensen, who has documented our meetings and provided many insightful suggestions as to the way forward for the ASTC. Recently, Ellen Ward has taken on the role of dispatching member communication emails and managing the ASTC Job Opportunities Service. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge Dave Newdick, our Vice President, who not only has provided valued support to me this past year, but has recently taken on the much of the workload in getting our new website up and running.

However, the entire committee has pulled together as a team and provided support where required, and without these people, there would be no ASTC. So as the outgoing President, I thank you for all your contribution, help and friendship over the past year – I hope to look forward to working with many of you in the coming year.

David Cross

**ASTC President 2018**