

## **South Australian and Northern Territory General Manager and National Special Projects Manager retires after 22.5 years service with Printing Industries Association of Australia**

Albert Chizmesya, aka; Al, retired recently after 22.5 year's employment with Printing Industries Association of Australia.

Albert commenced employment in the South Australian Region of Printing and Allied Trades Employers Federation of Australia (PATEFA), which in 1996 became Printing Industries Association of Australia, on 4 February 1985 as the Executive Officer, and two years later was appointed Regional Manager.

He was born and educated in Renmark, South Australia.

Always imbued with a work ethic, he worked after school, on Saturdays, and during school holidays at the local General store.

During the Christmas/New Year school holidays it was wheat harvest time and the local store held the South Australian Farmers Union agency, the latter purchased wheat and other cereal crops. As there were no silos, or bulk wheat handling in that era, the wheat was marketed in bags.

Albert's task was to weigh the bags of wheat brought to the railway siding by the farmers, record the weight, and tally the weights at the end of the day. The wheat was transferred to railway trucks via an elevator, and consigned to Adelaide.

It was hot work, there was no shade at the railway siding, and temperatures were 100 degrees Fahrenheit for days on end.

Sporting interest was cycle racing as a participant, which lead at an early age to employment as manager of Bruce Small's Malvern Star cycle shop in Renmark.

In later years Albert moved to Adelaide and had a number of years in the automotive industry, subsequently as Managing Director of a company which he owned in partnership.

In Adelaide the recreation turned to motor cycle racing, and many enjoyable memories attach to local and country meetings.

During this period the Defence Force beckoned, and another career as a "ballot" National Serviceman commenced. Albert recalls that it is the only significant lottery he has ever won.

He held a number of administrative, logistic, staff, and command appointments whilst in the Army. He became particularly interested in the application of the Army Law Manual, which became valuable at later stages of his employment.

Albert concluded his Military Service having attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

He joined the South Australian Region of Printing Industries Association of Australia in the year of the Region's centenary, it having been established on 25 June 1885, sufficiently early enough to be involved with the organisation of the Centenary Celebrations, which included the bringing of the third National Print Awards to South Australia for the occasion.

Having settled into the work, it was obvious that a significant amount of the activities were related to industrial matters on behalf of the members.

Albert found it difficult to come to grips with the reality of the volume of Industrial Awards that companies were respondent to, and more particularly there were hundreds of active State Awards, over and above the Federal Awards.

He was cognisant of the fact that the Army operated fundamentally within the confines of the Manual of Military Law, the Manual of Personnel Administration, and the Logistic Manual.

Albert confided to some close associates that a single Award would suffice – obviously he was before his time – there are moves currently - 22 years later - to reduce the number of awards, and to simplify them.

It became evident to Albert that whilst the Association was well known to the membership, it had little or no profile with other employer associations, the government, and it did not have any formal standing or recognition with the industrial tribunals.

Liaison was gradually forged with the other employer associations. This endured over the years, and included regular meetings on matters that affected business and industry, particularly the printing and associated industries. There was always the understanding that the Printing Association reserved the right to take an alternate view, and action that was more beneficial to the printing and associated industries, which occurred on a significant number of occasions.

Links were established with government, and government Instrumentalities. These were maintained with whatever complexion of government was in office. The outcomes were that government, over the years, actively sought submissions from the Association on a variety of matters, including proposed changes to legislation. "I made certain that this privileged position was maintained by making submissions to all Government requests, and made submissions on any other matters involving Government Instrumentalities etc, that impinged on the Industry," Albert said.

The establishment of formal credentials with the industrial tribunals occurred initially by Albert appearing in matters that affected the Industry, as an "intervenor" seeking leave of the tribunal to appear on behalf of the members and the industry. This is not the case today, nor has it been for many years, the tribunals include the Association in issues under their respective jurisdictions.

In the early days if there were issues where a member had been summoned to the tribunal, the practice was to have representation from the head office, or to engage a solicitor. This did not sit well with Albert, and so he began representing members in the Industrial Relations Court and Commission, also the Equal

Opportunity Commission, as and when required, with considerable success. Significantly, there were matters that were under the jurisdiction of the federal tribunal, others under the state jurisdiction.

It was during this period that Albert came to the conclusion that the industrial awards are not set piece, or rigid in their application, but open to interpretation – this he used to effect.

Albert enjoyed the “cut and thrust” of appearing in the tribunals on behalf of members, and did so on countless occasions during his employment. The high level of tribunal hearings activity was during the “heyday” of the unfair dismissal legislation, this has diminished markedly, almost to zero, following the advent of the WorkChoices legislation in March 2006.

Albert as a very young lad was fascinated by the title “Conciliation and Arbitration Commission,” little did he contemplate that, at a future time, he would function in the successor tribunal, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

Albert had the distinction of being an advocate in the tribunals; a witness in one occasion when he needed to clarify a point incorrectly proffered by the opposing solicitor, and was appointed to the panel and sat on the Workers Compensation, and Occupational Health and Safety Appeal Tribunals.

There are three precepts that have motivated Albert through the years, these are:

1. If something is worth doing, it is worth doing it well
2. Do not leave for tomorrow, that which can be done today, and
3. The five “p’s” - prior preparation prevents poor performance.

Above all, service to the membership was always number one priority, and this was instilled into local staff.

“If there is a residual legacy to my employment with the Association, it is having significantly and materially raised the profile of Printing Industries Association of Australia in the South Australian and Northern Territory Region. I value tremendously the support and friendship of the members, the National, and Regional Councils, and colleagues throughout my period of employment with Printing Industries Association of Australia,” he said.

Albert served on many industry related committees during his career within the Industry, including, Chairman of the National Printing Industry Training Council – South Australian Division for a number of years, a Director of the National Organisation, Member of the Croydon Park TAFE College Council, Member of the WorkCover Corporation Employer Strategic Committee, Member of the Business Services Industry Skills Board, Member of the Defence Reserves Support Committee, just to name a few.

Albert is the recipient of a number of community Service Decorations. He was invested as a Knight of the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem in 1993, and appointed Knight Commander in 2005. He is also a Justice of the Peace.

The decision to retire was taken after deep consideration, and with a great degree of sadness, following continuing significant health problems. To quote Albert: “It has been an honour, privilege, and a pleasure to serve the Membership, and the Industry – it has been a fantastic journey.”