

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

To say that the past year has been the lowest point in the 45 years of existence of the Pedal Power Association, would be an understatement. As the rest of the world, we have felt the devastating effects of the Covid19 pandemic over the past year. In January 2020, our membership stood at 11 115 but in January 2021, we saw a huge drop in numbers, to an all-time low of only 3566 paid up members. To accommodate cyclists in these tough economic times, the Executive Committee reduced membership fees to only R100.00. Thankfully, with the opening of entries for the upcoming October 2021 Cape Town Cycle Tour, the numbers steadily increased, and our membership number presently stands at 9228, for which we are very thankful.

Over the past year, most of our extremely popular fun rides and seeding events had to be cancelled due to Covid19 regulations, including premier events such as the Maluti Double 90, Mangaung Cycle Tour as well as One Tonner. Supported events assisted by the PPA's team of event organisers, also fell victim to the lockdown regulations.

Unfortunately, without our historic funding, the PPA has not been able to host these popular events. We are fully aware of the fact that the traditional PPA fun rides have always been a major attraction to cyclists and the reason so many members renewed membership every year. It was with this in mind, that the Executive Committee engaged in a strategic review of the organisation in 2021, to identify key issues other than events, in support of our mandate and cycling in South Africa.

Besides fun rides and events which we know are extremely popular, the PPA has for many years neglected the advocacy features of our constitution.

The following conclusions were identified by the Executive Committee:

- *SA remains essentially stuck in an outdated paradigm of transport and urban development planning which effectively includes cycling as an afterthought at best;*

- *Attitudes towards cycling are often negative / unaware of cycling as a practical option to travel;*
- *Although mandated to serve the interest of the broad cycling community, PPA needs to become appropriately resourced, to broaden its cycling advocacy initiatives;*
- *PPA is also primarily a regional organisation with a significant portion of membership base being from the Western Cape; and*
- *Funding is under significant pressure due to reduced membership, and surplus funds from the Cape Town Cycle Tour distributions being restricted and events not being profitable.*

Shifting our focus to advocacy will benefit cyclists from all provinces as we aim to push for safer roads, more cycle lanes along planned routes, upgrading of existing routes, bicycle parking facilities as well as harsher punishment for offenders to ensure that the roads become a safer space for all cyclists in South Africa and to encourage cyclists to take to the road again. Your membership will financially support our quest to safeguard cyclists on our roads. The way forward for the PPA is to call for, promote and gather support for cycling and improved safety as well as focus on the convenience of cyclists within our urbanised and semi-urban regions.

To this end, while PPA will continue with our event programs and support after the pandemic, the organisation needs to shift its focus onto several other important issues over the next couple of years.

Externally:

- *Government – Promote a government mind shift so that cycling becomes a priority and departure point for all transport and urban planning and systems developments and implementations; and*
- *Awareness - Raising awareness of cycling as a legitimate and desired mode of transport and recreation.*

Internally:

- *Develop and expand the organisational knowledge base to enable us to support and justify programs, projects, and campaigns. This includes fully understanding policy and legislation, best practices, partner organisations, funding opportunities, cycling safety, and cycling development approaches throughout South Africa.*
- *Membership - Broaden and expand our membership base to become, diverse and inclusive. Our goal is to have at least 25 000 members broadly representative of the South African population both in terms of demographics and location.*
- *Funding – With the lack of funding due to reduced events and membership income, a change in approach is required to ensure funding streams become more diverse and secure.*
- *Communications and Awareness Raising – a structured program based on revisiting initial communications approaches and building on Safe Cycling’s “Stay Wider of the Rider” campaign will be initiated so that “Cycling becomes part of the Solution”; and*
- *Expanding our approach to partnerships, collaborations and affiliations so that there is a broader reach for cycling advocacy.*

Restructuring the PPA to achieve the above set goals requires a paced transition to ensure we find suitable resources and funding. The first step in achieving our goals, will be the appointment of a CEO. As I am writing my report, the process of finding a suitable candidate, is in its final stage. The right candidate, be it he or she, will have to focus on the issues highlighted and develop a course of action to successfully deliver on the vision and strategy which will necessitate recruiting suitable key staff to manage the focus areas that the Executive Committee has identified.

Although this year has not been a good one, your Executive Committee has used their time wisely to re-address and visualise the future of the PPA and has spent many hours in zoom meetings to get to this point. I am very grateful for the dedication and passion of the committee.

A huge thank you to our staff members, who have remained loyal and dedicated during extremely tough times of working with reduced salaries as well as no bonuses or increases for the past year and a half. Here too, it has been great to witness the resourcefulness coming from the team to cut costs and to stage events under difficult circumstances.

Finally, my thanks must go to the resolute support of our membership base. Without your loyalty in continuing to renew your PPA membership, some for most of the 45 years, we could not continue.

Steve Hayward: Chairman.

14 September 2021.