

John Bavea: GLENRAC AGM Speech – 16 November 2022

On receiving an invitation to speak, it was suggested that I might track the evolution of GLENRAC over the 11 years that I have been involved.

Upon reflecting, and given I am in my 70th year, while my impressions as to this journey had some degree of clarity, the detail and facts surrounding the period where, alas, somewhat vague

How do I start? The number eleven/one one. In the 11th century (or was it the twelfth or thirteenth?), Marco Polo wrote at some length of his travels. Students study the detail and while much of what he wrote was a true reflection of the history and geography of the time it is, they believe, a record of fact sprinkled rather deliciously with a little fiction or was it his perception or what might have been. And once again I digress.

Here we go. Do I start with once upon a time or there was a green hill far away? No back to 11 years/one one.

Having found our farm, our green hill far away, I became aware of GLENRAC's dieback- inspired, plantings, and other good, environmental and productive farming activities.

To become involved at committee level. I was also partly driven to connect socially with the community as I had reverted to my natural state that being something of a hermit.

What I found was an organisation with a strong, independent brand that brought me into contact with a wonderful group of people with diverse knowledge, skills, experience and intellect, cumulatively far greater than my own,

In GLENRAC and its people, it was clear that by harnessing this natural capital much could be achieved. GLENRAC, at the time, had two part-time employees, and was struggling financially.

We, as an organisation, were dependent on hit-and-miss government funding with very limited reserves, job, security, or a career path for staff. its ability to deliver was therefore limited, with no guarantee as to a future.

The committee and staff war-gamed survival and crafted a way forward, focusing on strengths, needs and responding to an ever-changing set of environmental, agricultural and community challenges.

GLENRAC, during the past 11 years, saw the worst drought in 100 years. It later saw the worst drought in European history, it saw catastrophic bushfires, and it has lived through the first major pandemic in over a century,

GLENRAC has seen and been with the people in the good times and the challenges.

During this time, many organisations that share our space were damaged, and have yet to recover. Not so GLENRAC.

GLENRAC engages the community where they are at. GLENRAC does not judge.

It is outcome focused. GLENRAC is committed to providing the tools and introducing skills toward attaining a healthy, more vibrant environment in which the landscape and those who live in it, and tend to its needs, to prosper environmentally, socially and productively.

Now you have an organisation with seven full and part time employees and a growing financial reserve that provides security in a volatile funding environment. You see a growing online presence, a growing membership stretching across the New England, New South Wales, and beyond

GLENRAC is coming of age, and with it comes even greater opportunity and a responsibility to make a difference. The past 11 years with GLENRAC have been challenging, good fun and personally rewarding.

For those contemplating an involvement I know there are opportunities; be they as a member, as a management committee member, or to engage your passions and unique skills serving on a project committee,

To be part of GLENRAC's journey has been a privilege, and I have no doubt that its contribution will only continue to grow.

I see GLENRAC, as only just beginning its journey, and that in the next 11 years, you'll see it emerge on a yet bigger canvas, as a butterfly emerges from its cocoon to become one of New South Wales leading, if not the leader, in its field.

Merry Christmas to all and to all have a good night,

Thank you.