



PHASA

Professional Hunters' Association
of South Africa

Dries van Coller **2018 President's Report**

It feels surreal to be writing my President's Report for 2018. I still cannot believe that 2018 is rapidly drawing to a close. Looking at the amount of work and number of issues that PHASA has had to address, it suddenly becomes clear why time has flown by so quickly.

The year 2018 will be remembered for many reasons: some negative, but for the most part, the year was positive. Nobody could have anticipated the unintended consequences regarding resolutions adopted at the 2017 PHASA AGM. In retrospect, I can wholeheartedly state that the "darkest hour is just before the dawn". Believing in the positive has helped me keep a productive attitude.

As President of PHASA, I was faced with an enormous number of challenges that required a great deal of introspection. There were no clear answers and solutions for attending to the tasks at hand. The consequences of the 2017 AGM held serious challenges for me professionally and personally. Being an individual who does not accept the status quo and will not let emotional reasoning influence my sound judgment, I needed to evaluate my personal convictions against the mandate the members of PHASA had voted for and required me to implement. I can unequivocally state that all of my decisions, were done after careful consideration.

I am fortunate to have had some of the greatest mentors in the professional hunting family, namely Ian Goss and Ronnie Rowland, both past presidents of PHASA. During my week in Namibia with Ronnie, Kotie Herholdt and various other friends, I could take time to listen, and personally evaluate the complexity and consequences of what my task as president would entail. My gratitude for wisdom and support, knows no bounds.

Those that have taken the time to become more closely acquainted with me will understand that I do not shy away from responsibility. I had serious conflict to resolve. My religious beliefs, the utmost support of my wife and family, and time in nature helped me to formulate my way forward. I can witness to the clarity that is received, once one becomes silent and approach each problem for what it is in its most simple form.

A meeting with the newly elected executive committee was convened on 8 December 2017, and my position explained and discussed at length. This was essential for me to pave the way forward.

I did not step down and resign as President of PHASA; I opted to fight for what is right and not to succumb to peer pressure. This decision did not come without its sacrifice, but after a year has passed, I can proudly confirm that I gave my utmost.

In retrospect, I am extremely satisfied with what has been achieved and, more than ever, a very proud PHASA member. I do not have one iota of doubt that the decision I took to lead PHASA was the correct one.

I do not want to dwell on the negative aspects of what transpired after the AGM, as I am sure all present are aware of the media frenzy that ensued.

True friends come to the fore when circumstances are dire. PHASA survived the onslaught and stood firmly. I can only attribute this to the strong executive and office staff, and the support of other industry role-players, namely CHASA, and most importantly, PHASA members. South Africans are no strangers to adversity and have a sound track record

of survival. After all, the greater part of the world still view us as living in the wild, thus we have adapted as such! This characteristic came to the fore and a united front was presented to those that opposed PHASA's position.

When one believes in their cause and has a passion for what is important to the industry, a formidable force is created.

PHASA has weathered the storm and is now making significant progress, I am proud to report.

The subsequent breakaway of some members to form a new organisation was inevitable. The positive aspect of this was that like-minded individuals were brought together. New ideas and innovative ways of thinking could be sourced, all for the good of PHASA.

The suspension of PHASA's participation in OPAAA; the formation of the breakaway organisation and subsequent loss of some members; Dallas Safari Club's withdrawal of support; the termination of Krieghoff's support; the expulsion from the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (ICG); and the Wild Sheep Foundation's termination of support may all be attributed to the decisions taken and adopted at the 2017 AGM. I must just mention that Safari Club International (SCI) expressed their opinion and differences, but continue to assist PHASA.

The aforementioned actions seemed impulsive, irrational and premature. Be that as it may, PHASA has always respected the views and opinions of others, and will continue to do so.

Where one door closes, numerous others open, along with a couple of windows as well. It is most definitely reassuring to see the support of new partners that have joined forces with PHASA.

The year 2018 was without a doubt a historical one. Not only did it mark the end of an era, but also the start of a glorious new one. PHASA had to evolve and meet the ever-changing demands of modern society, which led to the assessment that was conducted, which culminated in the new logo. The new logo represents the values of our association and all stakeholders in our country.

PHASA is a member-driven organisation that supports and protects the rights of its members.

The association recognises and respects private ownership and the valuable contribution of the hunting industry in totality to the Republic of South Africa.

The South African conservation success story is unparalleled. It is unfortunate that comparisons are often drawn between South Africa and other African countries without taking our different conservation models into account. Conservation objectives differ greatly within these models. The significant growth of the South African wildlife industry is well documented. To what may we attribute this success? We need to be brutally honest in answering this question. Private ownership of land and animals carries significant responsibility and financial implications. We need to clearly understand that the single biggest contributing factor to our wildlife success is financial and economic viability. Conservation is a result and not the primary objective.

PHASA's decision to accept responsibility and seek solutions for the controversial matter of the sustainable utilisation of captive-bred lions, or ranch lions, as we refer to them, has been a challenge. We were not naive and systematically addressed the matter with due diligence. The single biggest challenge was and will be for some time to come, the lack of education and understanding of the industry. Emotion has been allowed to cloud sound judgement, as happens so often when the facts are not known.

A substantial amount of research and discussion with all stakeholders has guided PHASA in finding viable solutions. The proposal that will be presented for adoption later attests to the efforts of many stakeholders to find an African solution for an African problem. I am proud of the results and truly believe that it would be the best course of action.

PHASA has been extremely active in numerous spheres of the hunting and tourism sector. For too long, we have been focused internally. It is paramount that this changes. We need to realise our role as ambassadors of South Africa and promote our country as one of the finest hunting and adventure tourism destinations for the family in the world. We need to focus on the positive aspects that our country offers. PHASA will continue to promote our members and our country internationally, with vigour.

After the slight decline in membership after the 2017 AGM, I am confident going forward, as the steady growth in membership indicates that PHASA is making a positive contribution to the industry and serving its members. Our membership is back on par with previous years and continues to grow.

With the loss of significant donors, however, we were faced with some financial challenges. I am pleased to report that with strong management and sound financial prudence, we will meet all our obligations.

Our first online auction was a great success and we have learnt a vast amount. So, going forward, we will improve on an already sound foundation. Thank you to all donors and supporters.

I feel I have so much to share with you, but must consider the time constraints and cannot do justice to some of the matters in the timeframe allowed. Therefore, I invite any interested party to engage with me on any topic I may not have adequately addressed in this report back. I do not regard any matter as trivial by any means, but so much has transpired that it would not be appropriate to take up any more time.

PHASA is healthy, PHASA remains an industry leader and PHASA is going upward and onward. Become active and make a difference.

I wish to conclude by firstly thanking my Heavenly Father for the gifts he has bestowed on me, my wife and family for their continued encouragement and favour, the PHASA membership for their amazing support and trust, my executive committee and, finally, the backbone of PHASA, our office ladies.

I applaud you.

Thank you for your indulgence.