

5th January 2014

Linux Australia President's Report for 2013

Executive summary

This has been my first term as President of Linux Australia after serving three years as Treasurer. I have been very fortunate to work with such an excellent, diverse, talented, diligent and dedicated Council and I can't thank them enough for the hard work they have put in throughout the year.

In addition to the hard work of the Council we have seen an increase in activities performed by members. We had a record high number of Linux Australia-run events, grants, donations, advocacy and other activities. Linux Australia is a community and I see it as the Council's role to enable members to achieve the organisations goals.

Towards the end of the year the council conducted a survey of its membership to get a feel of how well the organisation is perceived to be operating. I strongly encourage members to read the report and the recommendations outlined in the report.

As highlighted by the report, and our own observations, the organisation has some room for improvement in communication - specifically around promoting the organisation's aims and objectives. As such I would like to see the new Council for the 2014 term focus on updating material on the outdated linux.org.au website in addition to upgrading our Membership platform, MemberDB, to enable better communication with members.

Events and Conferences

In 2013 there were 7 conferences/events ran under as part of Linux Australia.

- Joomla Day Melbourne 2013. melbourne.joomladay.org.au
- linux.conf.au 2013. lca2013.linux.org.au
- Wordcamp Melbourne 2013. 2013.melbourne.wordcamp.org
- PyCon AU 2013. 2013.pycon-au.org
- Drupal Gov 2013. drupalact.org.au/events/drupalgov-canberra-2013
- Joomla Day Sydney 2013. sydney.joomladay.org.au
- StixCamp Gembrook 2013. barcampmel.org

Reports from the various conferences and their activities can be found at <http://linux.org.au/sub-committees> or their individual websites.

A timeline of all of Linux Australia's events can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/koye3mw>.

Grants

Linux Australia has long had a grants programme[0] open to its members for helping fund items that are in alignment with our values[1]. This year the Council approved 7 requests from members.

- Travel grants for PyCon US *by Chris Neugebauer*. \$3,734.33
- CompCon Travel request for Elena Williams *by Andrew Donnellan*. \$847.00
- Using open source software to support effective teaching and learning practices in Vietnamese schools *by Shaun Nykvist*. \$1,850.00
- Open Food Web development sponsorship *by Kirsten Larsen*. \$2,000 + VPS
- WordPress Melbourne Meetup Recording Equipment Grant *by Aaron Rutley*. \$1,000
- Hardware for developer *by Jackson Doak*. \$189.65
- Rails Girls Brisbane food sponsorship *by Robert Feldman*. \$500

Travel Grants

The travel grants programme[2] was given a budget of \$10,000 to help fly delegates to linux.conf.au 2014 in Perth who could otherwise not attend. In the future it would be nice to consolidate this with similar programmes ran for PyCon AU and our other conferences.

Donations

In addition to the grants the council donated money to the following causes.

- Malcolm Tredinnick Memorial Prize. \$1,439.87
- Software Freedom Conservancy. \$1,310.75

Sponsorship

The council also sponsored and were listed as a supporter for the following events.

- Australian Internet Governance Forum. \$1,818.18
- GovHack \$5,000.

Sub-Committees

The current non-conference based sub-committees are:

- Admin Team
- AV Subcommittee
- Mirror Team
- Web Team
- Sydney Linux Users Group
- LOGIN (NewcastleLUG)

- TASLUG
- Media and Communications Subcommittee

Reports from the various sub-committees and their activities can be found at <http://linux.org.au/sub-committees>

linux.conf.au bid process

During 2013 the Council deliberated and decided it was in the best interests of linux.conf.au to move to a two-year out bid process for the conference[2]. This means at the close of LCA2014 both LCA2015 and LCA2016 locations will be announced. Then, during the year of 2014, the council will take bids for a city to run LCA2017. This change to established process is intended to provide significant benefits to both the bid team; providing extended time for logistical planning and team development, and to Linux Australia in ensuring a pipeline for conference planning.

Advocacy, outreach and related activities

Through our Twitter account, we highlighted articles of interest to the Australian Linux community and grew our number of followers. We contributed to submissions on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and supported the Australian Internet Governance Forum, funding under-represented cohorts to attend.

Survey

Linux Australia engaged ACSPRI - the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated, to conduct the Linux Australia Member Survey 2013. The survey was conducted using entirely free and open source software.

The full report can be found here

<http://lists.linux.org.au/pipermail/linux-aus/2013-December/021314.html>.

I would also like to personally thank Kathy Reid for her hard work in seeing this through.

The key points were;

- We have a previously under-recognised significant population who identify as retired and have needs for basic and introductory information around Linux.
- We have a poor pipeline of younger and student members that requires attention.
- Our voice for advocacy, influence and promotion requires strengthening.
- We need to promote more vocally what we do.
- Linux Australia is generally doing well; but there is room for us to do more.
- We need to keep linux.conf.au affordable.
- There is a strong level of confidence in Council generally but more members would like to know us more.
- For many members this was the first communication they had received as a member.

I am proud to say we have released all of the survey data and tools in open formats to allow our

members to analyse and draw their own conclusions. I would like to encourage people to do so to find areas they can help improve within the organisation.

Challenges

In 2014 I would like to encourage broader contributions from the Linux Australia community; there is much work to be done, and many opportunities for volunteers to gain transferable skills through helping out. Wider participation will also help us to prevent the rate of burnout observed in the community; this remains a challenge for the foreseeable future.

We also spent time this year dealing with some unfortunate inflammatory posts on the linux-aus mailing list. Council's energy is more constructively expended elsewhere and we would like to encourage our members to continue to uphold our values of respect and diversity.

Closing comments

Aside from expanding our volunteer base mentioned above, I would like to continue to expand the activities of Linux Australia and enable community members to do more awesome work.

In 2014, besides continuing our present activities, one of our high priorities should be to develop our website and engagement collateral.

Finally, I am not sure I can stress enough the contribution that unthanked volunteers make towards Linux Australia. I wish I could list them all but I believe it to be impossible. There are many people within our community doing great work towards Linux Australia and Open Source both in the spotlight and in the background. Needless to say, on behalf of Linux Australia, and personally, I am sincerely grateful for all contributions and I cannot thank you enough.

It is through the continued hard work of these individuals that Linux Australia continues to operate, and as such, it is of insurmountable importance that volunteers continue to step up and be engaged.

I am proud to be a part of this organisation and I look forward to the year to come.

Warm Regards,
Joshua Hesketh
- President, Linux Australia
January, 2014

[0] <http://linux.org.au/projects/grants>

[1] <http://linux.org.au/values>

[2] <http://travelgrants.linux.org.au>

[3] <http://lists.linux.org.au/pipermail/linux-aus/2013-November/021212.html>