

ANNUAL DIRECTORS REPORT – AGM 2015

This has been a huge year for AfrikaBurn, with groundbreaking creative endeavours, unique events, exploding numbers (and anvils), and seismic changes.

From modest roots as a small collective of creative miscreants engaged in the manifestation of a movement, we've evolved into a self-sustaining Not-For-Profit, with 5 full time team members, 26 part-time team members, and over 70 committed portfolio members.

We've been the overenthusiastic kid, the grumpy teenager, the shouty young parent, and the wayward aunty ... We've started tackling some big themes, caught some serious flack, and been called out on some contentious issues ... But we have faced these challenges head on, found our stride, and we are heading in a direction we can feel proud of.

These are some of our vital statistics ...

Tickets passed the 10 000 mark this year, with 10 004 issued. The Tankwa Town citizens swelled to 9 264, with the rest of the numbers made up by the crew behind the scenes – those who generate the event and keep us safe – the Ops team, DPW and Clan crew, medics and sanctuary crew, fire crew, and the event guardians.

While we still get a significant number of weekend warriors, the busiest days at the gate were Monday, Wednesday and Thursday (incoming) and Sunday (egress)

The Medics tended to 414 of these good citizens, mostly for minor complaints like sunburn, dehydration and cuts and scrapes (it's the desert, not rocket science ... use sunscreen and drink water). This was the year of broken bones, with 10 fractures treated. Seven patients were serious enough to be med-evaced, 2 by air and 5 by ambulance.

The Signage and Demarcation team spent 12 days laying 21km of tape, and securing it with around 7000 nails (almost 10kg). Most of this was recycled from previous years. Over the course of 7 days they planted 274 signs, using 544 pieces of rebar to anchor them. Leave No Trace spent 8 days restoring the site to its original condition. We took 30 tons of waste and recycling off site this year - much more than in previous years – with a significant portion of it from the breakdown of our old storage site at Climax.

Tankwa Town grew significantly this year, with new camping zones flowering off the bottom of 10ish and along the old airstrip. This has changed the distribution of camping across the site. Off Centre Camp (and our Hive) moved to 8ish, which is more central in the new site layout.

Just under 1400 volunteer shifts were officially filled this year, with many more doing shifts without going through the Volunteer Sign Up Booth. Volunteer Booth faeries, Volunteer Coordinators, Kids registration, Media booth, Arteria, Ice, Art assistants (and 170 people volunteering to help set up artworks), Fire perimeter, Burn Inspectors, MOOP stars, Airport, Kitchen ... there are multiple ways for people to help keep Tankwa Town rolling.

Die Hek had kiff t-shirt SWAG for volunteers that was highly sought after, and Greeters rocked with over 10 people at some shifts – whole camps did it together.

With a bigger site, the demands on Rangers grew significantly, but the corps is growing too, and great leadership is stepping forward. Dedicated DMV Ranger ranks will also increase in the year ahead. And for the first time we had dedicated Sound Rangers.

We had an average of 4 Green Dots out each night. And an encouraging number of people came for Sanctuary training and volunteered as sitters.

DPW crew was 47 strong (seriously strong, and buff!), mostly made up of local crew but with many volunteers coming from far-flung corners of the burniverse. The longest stretch anyone spent on site was 52 consecutive days. On 39 of those someone slept in the Cuddle

Bubble under the stars.

They fixed a generator a day, on average, and fixed Rommel and Rusty almost 30 times in total. Dug holes, raised lamp poles, pitched tents, built 171 loos with views, brewed EM by the barrel, distributed 8600 odd rolls of toilet paper and gave absolutely zero shits.

41 morning meetings, 32 evening meetings, 1 wedding and three square meals brought them together each day. The kitchen crew dished up 4610 meals!

Between them all they drank around 1500 beers and 41 bottles of whisky over the 50 odd days they spent out there, raising and lowering Tankwa Town.

88 theme camps ringed the kring and the horns, stretching along 6ish and 10ish boulevards and into the suburbs.

Around 135 registered mutant vehicles traversed the Binnekring and beyond.

R80 000 in grant funding supported the build of 9 of these MV's. Ten vehicles didn't make the grade as mutants, and their registration was rejected. Two vehicles were officially banned, and 1 driver had his license suspended.

DMV stayed at 6ish, and the Grease Monkeys set up just behind them in the suburbs, a perfect spot for one of their repair stations.

We placed 65 registered artworks and another 9 unregistered.

Twenty of these were official burns (with many more smaller pieces burning unofficially). Included in this number is the magnificent Clan burn and the beautiful Metamorphosis temple burn.

All in all over 30 tons of reclaimed and waste wood burnt in 24 hours, including the longest sculpture ever to burn, "Love the Way You Lie", at 121m.

We awarded R480 000 in grants from the AfrikaBurn grant pot, supporting 31 creative projects.

The DAC funding brought in a further R1 000 000, providing additional funding for 4 key projects – The Clan build (in Sutherland), Metamorphosis (the temple space, developed in Jozi), The Mantis Project (involving the Elandsvlei community), and The Flaming Amazing Show (involving Ocean View and Masiphumelele community members).

In total around R1 700 000 was spent on art and creative projects this year.

Nice to Meet You made it's debut on our calendar, a kind of show and tell at our home base at The Bijou and the Nansen Street yard. Urban Golf ran as an independent fundraiser event on the same day and was hugely fun. For Decompression we tried something a little bit different this year, running a day-into-night event with lots of smaller spaces. Maker Faire held their first event in Cape Town, and AfrikaBurn participated, with a big DMV presence. We're planning a stronger collaboration going forward. Right now we're busy developing Streetopia – these long imagined plans are finally manifested and we'll be flooding a stretch of Observatory with art and activity all day on Saturday 28 November.

Community engagement in these events, and in our Outreach programs is growing.

Our communications platforms are helping to spread the word and the ethos.

We have 52 000 facebook friends, and counting. The top posts this year? Close on 25 000 people read the post announcing next year's theme. Over 63 000 read the 2016 dates announcement. And around 60 000 watched Max Mogale and Dewald Brand's short film "Burn: An Afrikan Experience".

The most we've ever spent on sponsored posts and social media marketing? Zip, zero, absolutely nada.

We've published 15 blog posts since April and 10 Latest News articles. Over the past year 212 000 people have taken a look at the AfrikaBurn website. South Africans make up 60%

of that, with the rest based mainly in the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Australia, Switzerland, Canada and Kenya. It's a pretty big burnerverse out there, and they are hungry for information.

The Geek Squad have worked tirelessly at the frontlines of the back end of all this – keeping our site up in the face of cyber attack, rebuilding the Burner Bio, of which 14 382 have been registered so far, re-jigging our registration and application forms, and building the framework for an online photographers' gallery. Next up is an allocation system for Tankwa Town's airspace.

We've held 2 Town Halls this past year, and a public discussion on Plug n Play camping, and there will be more in the months to come.

In 2016 we'll start streaming radio from The Bijou. And, with support and tech from the crew behind Radio ARRR, there are plans to broadcast FM across the Tankwa Town site, as well as along some of the R355.

Meanwhile back at home base, it's been a cycle of employment growth, employment issues, legal ramifications, and all the associated challenges. But we're learning to navigate these growing pains.

We've spent around 4 weeks in reviews and debriefs figuring out how to bridge the gaps.

We've developed and adopted a Code of Conduct : # don't be kak, just be lekker.

We've had 2 disciplinary hearings, and for the first (and hopefully last) time we've had to dismiss someone. We've had an eviction. We've had a resignation and we've been to the CCMA, but come away properly reconciled.

And we've worked on policy to define how we deal with the challenges that led us to these crazy places.

We've had phenomenal support from Lisa Triani, collectively and individually, and as a team we've come a long way from the fracture and fractiousness of the past cycle.

The Ops team has met around 30 times, the directors have met over 50 times, and the members have spent around 6 days in various members meetings. Collectively that's around 2280 hours of thinking, questioning, exploring, inventing and planning. And that excludes the portfolio meetings!

There's a new Sheriff in town taking up the reins at the Nansen Street work yard, and lekker things are happening there. Sorting, shifting and shedding has brought more order to the space. With Charl Bothma and Luke Atkinson's help, we've built a strong room to keep our tools secure. A garden is growing, and a worm farm has taken up residence. There have been numerous DMV and DPW workdays, and sign painting days, as well as a tie-dye workshop offered by Melanie Brummer.

Nansen Street has been our spot for 6 Friday socials and our Homecoming celebration, where Lonesome Dave popped in to play for us. There have been lots of braais, 2 balloon fights, a duel (with some really gaudy big girl panties as the forfeit for the loser), and Miss Nesbitt lost her bunny dress.

AfrikaBurn is not just our annual event in the desert, and it's more than the sum of the events we hold throughout the year. It's an invitation to engage more deeply with yourself and your world, it's an experiment in community building.

And so a large part of what we do is quite quiet Outreach work in communities that are close to our homes and hearts. We have had unprecedented support from the burner community volunteering and the local Tankwa community comes out in full support.

Cooking food, assisting with moop and generally getting it.

So herewith some Outreach stats around the event itself and our activities throughout the year.

Outreach acts as a catalyst. With a set budget of 3.5% of our full turnover, this year we had financial resources of around R350 000.

And these human and financial resources have been working hard to generate a positive impact –

We've established a scholarship program that is currently putting 6 Tankwa children through Calvinia High School, along with a bursary for housing at the hostel. One of them is now the fastest under 18 runner in the Boland, breaking all the records for the 200m dash. Provisions were made for the care of 28 Elandsvlei students all year.

We're assisting with the building of a hostel at Brakfontein.

We've helped stock 3 Tankwa libraries with donated books.

We've done 4 medical runs to the Tankwa this year, providing full health checks for the elderly. Volunteer Dr Gio managed to arrest a virulent bacterial skin infection running through the children of the community.

We've assisted with the building of the community centre, and the rebuilding of the padstal after it was destroyed in an arson attack.

The donkey cart weekends are now a well-established part of the Tankwa annual calendar and these beasts of burden have become a source of great pride in the local community. Aside from organizing the event, in collaboration with the Cart Horse Association, Outreach has provided 4 full donkey cart harnesses this year.

6 Solar panels have been distributed, and 20 plus solar geysers.

We're helping the Trauma Centre at Woodstock Police Station, and helping at the Khayelitsha soup kitchen.

32 Elandsvlei and Brakfontein locals worked on the Mantis Project build and walked her around the binnekring this year.

Uprize's Moringa Tree Project is gaining momentum.

The firewood job project supplied all the firewood the team used on site at AfrikaBurn this year.

Over 200 donated bicycles have been distributed by David Balairs' Pedals for Peace initiative, in collaboration with AfrikaBurn Outreach. Many of the Tankwa locals now have wheels of their own, particularly the children and young adults.

And right now we're assisting Shawco with aid to students and workers at UCT...with similar projects being supported by the Jozi burners.

As our local community grows and deepens its commitment to the guiding principles, so too does our relationship with the global burner community develop.

The Lakes of Fire (Chicago) burner exchange program continues, and Greg Gilowey has stepped forward to run the logistics of the program for AfrikaBurn.

This year we also provided some financial support for a skills development trip to Burning Seed, for a key member of our Ops team.

We've been completely blown away by the commitment and gees of the volunteers who've come in from other regionals, some of whom have stepped into major site roles for AfrikaBurn. And we're chuffed by the gees the AfrikaBurn community has shown in support of other regional burns – with a small group heading off to Mid Burn this year.

And of course, we were thrilled to meet with and host Larry Harvey, Burning Man founder, on his visit to South Africa – both in Jozi and in Cape Town.

What will AfrikaBurn look like next year? We'll have to wait and see where this beautiful eXperiment takes us. One thing's for sure though – it's going to be lekker!

To all of you here, and to all of you reading this, thank you for your time today. And for all the other days ... for the joy, enthusiasm, care, blood, sweat, tears and cheers you bring to the beautiful thing that is AfrikaBurn!

Yours in trusty dusty duty,
Sam, Robert and Paul – for the people AfrikaBurn