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The Manager Company Announcements Office Australian Securities Exchange Electronic Lodgement LandMark White Limited ABN 50 102 320 329 ACN 102 320 329 Head Office: Level 15, 55 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000 GPO Box 3359 Sydney NSW 2001 Telephone 02 8823 6300 Facsimile 02 8823 6399 www.lmw.com.au

# Chairman's 2014 AGM Address

In the 11 years since I was appointed to the Board of the LandMark White Group, the property sector has gone through both the good and the tough times. As I retire as Chairman, the signs are that the property sector as a whole is well past the very difficult market issues arising from the GFC. The demand for LandMark White property valuation services is strengthening as commercial property sentiment continues to improve and residential property demand is still strong across Australia.

## **Overview of the 2014 Financial Year**

The 2014 financial year results show LandMark White has a broad revenue base and we believe it is well-placed to increase its market share. The results, which are outlined in detail in the Annual Report, show the Group's Profit after Tax grew 61%, due in part to our ability to provide a national valuation network for our clients. This profit was achieved with a 4.4% increase in Gross Revenues and gave a 1.6 cent rise in Earnings per Share to 4.2 cents.

The results also reflect the Company's focus on growing its residential property valuation services and a renewed emphasis on managing back-office costs. The creation of innovative mobile valuation software that gives our valuers a major competitive advantage underpins residential property services' strong growth. Residential Services are now over 50% of LandMark White's total fee revenues. The increase over the past year is also the result of LandMark White's appointment to some additional residential property banking panels.

Although the improvement in the commercial property sector contributed to a reasonable result in 2014, there is still room for substantial growth. Further improvement in revenues will come from the introduction of additional services and a more proactive approach to client management. While we have a strong base of clients including lending institutions, developers and property investment companies, we acknowledge the need to market our services more effectively.

LandMark White is recognised for its proficiency in many classes of property valuation, and our national footprint allows us to align strongly with the needs of our clients. We recognise the need to develop innovative solutions, like we have for our residential clients, to broaden our commercial property client base and increase our market share.

### **Dividends**

In 2014, LMW Group declared and paid fully franked dividends totalling 3.75 cents per share, an increase of 0.5 cents over the previous financial year. The dividend reflects the improved 2014 result and the Board's commitment to providing shareholders with a superior dividend yield. With the share price at 48 cents, the dividend yield is 7.8% p.a., which with the franking Advice credits gives an effective return of 11.2%.

Property Research Business Valuation and Advice

National Offices: Brisbane Sydney Melbourne Gold Coast Parramatta Sunshine Coast Wollongong

## **Market Leadership**

In April 2014, we announced the appointment of Mr Chris Nicholl as our new Chief Executive Officer following the planned retirement of the company's co-founder Mr Brad Piltz. Chris has an extensive background in property across Asia, Australia and New Zealand and has had significant experience in developing and managing businesses and staff. Chris' skill and experience will assist LandMark White to deliver improved business outcomes from our existing operations and will support the development of new products and services to exploit LandMark White's reputation in property valuation services.

# **Strategic Review: Towards Excellence**

In the six months since Chris joined the company, one of his major achievements has been a "bottom-up, top-down" strategic review of the company, its market trends and its client base. Aided by the newly established Senior Management team which includes the Director of Commercial Operations, Director of Residential Valuations, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Information Officer, the review included staff focus groups that provided insights into areas of improvement and opportunities for growth.

The "2020: Towards Excellence" business plan will see LMW focus on 5 pathways to create a strong and vibrant market leader in the provision of commercial and residential property services. The five pathways are innovation; planning and executing for growth; people; measurement; and communication. These pathways will underpin all of LMW business activities over the next five years. Our vision is a company and a brand that is recognised as a leader in the provision of innovative client centric services, respected by our clients and acknowledged for the depth of talent we attract and retain and being highly regarded by our fellow valuers.

Over the past month Chris and his Senior Management team have collectively presented the "2020: Towards Excellence" plan to all staff. We recognise that property valuation is a people business and we need to invest in training and client systems to maximise our staff's talents and contribution. Communicating the company's direction, vision and objectives is a central part of creating a strong and dynamic workforce.

Achieving the business objectives outlined in this plan will require an upgrade to our IT infrastructure and the establishment of an innovation team to spearhead the development of our new products and services. The investments LandMark White will make in these areas are essential to developing our market leadership. We have already demonstrated our expertise in innovation with the mobile technology used in our residential valuation service, which considerably shortens the time needed to create and present client valuations. We see the new products and services to be developed for the commercial sector as extensions of work already undertaken.

## 2015

For the current financial year, our immediate external focus is on organic growth and diversification of the services that LandMark White currently offers. The company has a strong client base and we need to further develop our relationships with each of them to ensure we are winning, wherever possible, all of their property valuation business. Internally, the company's attention will be on bedding down the business strategy; building our communication channels; implementing new business reporting; and creating staff performance and retention programs.

There are many opportunities for LandMark White in markets outside the capital cities and building a franchise network is one way of diversifying our revenue. Although it is still early days in the planning process, we anticipate that the Company will concentrate on identifying further franchise opportunities in regional markets and gaining a better understanding of the openings that exist for our products and services in those regions.

Although our focus is very much on organic growth, we recognise that the rationalisation of the property valuation sector has started and is creating opportunities. The Board will consider appropriate acquisitions that will deliver sustainable market share; increase our competitive advantage; and /or bring new skills to the company. The essential element of any acquisition will be its ability to be earnings per share positive in the year of acquisition.

Over the past four or so years, there have been substantial increases in professional indemnity insurance premiums, driven in part by the fact there are very few companies prepared to offer property valuation liability insurance. Our continued investment in internal risk management systems has seen LandMark White achieve a reduction, albeit relatively small, in its current premiums. This reduction, against industry trends, is recognition of the processes we have put in place to manage our business risks.

With the first quarter completed, our results to date reflect a continuation of the growth we saw in 2014. We continue to forecast modest growth for 2015, as we focus on laying the appropriate foundations for longer-term sustainable improvement in market share and profits.

#### Staff and Board

As this is my last year as a Director and Chairman I would like to acknowledge the support I have received over the years from my fellow board members, Senior Management and staff. I would like to thank them all for their commitment to LandMark White and our clients.

Subject to his election at today's meeting, I am sure that John McCarthy is the right Chairman to assist Chris and his team build LandMark White's leadership in the property services sector. He has a distinguished track record in the property industry and his appointment is a substantial coup for this company. I believe his experience and knowledge will contribute in a most significant way to the future development of this business and the evolution of our strategy.

Finally I would like to thank our shareholders for their continued support. LandMark White Limited has a bright future and I am confident that it will continue to prosper under the management that has been put in place.

Stuart Gregory
Chairman and Non-Executive Director