

# Elaine Coote, Lock Distributors

## SSAA Service Member since 1991.

Life Member of the SSAA.

**E**laine and Robert Coote from Lock Distributors have been Service members of the SSAA since 1991. It all started when they were invited to attend the Conference and Trade Show on the Gold Coast.

1991 was the first year the Association allowed suppliers to take part, so it was exciting for Lock Distributors to be involved. Lock Distributors was already supplying padlocks to the industry primarily to Millers Self Storage and a few other storage facilities as well, when Barbara and Les Hart suggested they attend the 1991 conference. There were only a handful of suppliers exhibiting along with Steel Storage, Space Control from the US and distributors of an accounting system that was popular at the time.

From that conference, business picked up as the industry put their faith in the company. Initially, Lock

Distributors were resellers of locks but could see the industry growing, and they wanted to produce higher quality products, in 1992 they had their own padlocks designed. In the early days of self storage, many people thought any old lock that they could buy from the local hardware store would do, until there were a few dramas and would-be thieves quickly learned how to pick them.

Lock Distributors designed locks, especially for the storage industry and being part of the association helped the business evolve into what it is today.

Elaine's husband Robert (deceased) was the first service member to become President in the year 2000 for 12 months. Initially, there were concerns from self storage owners that having a service member as president would be a conflict of interest. However, Robert never used his position to push Lock Distributors products. This approach has led future suppliers to become Board members and presidents without any product bias.

During his time as president Robert oversaw additions to the Manual of Advice and Procedures which included:

- Death of a Storer
- Bankrupt Storer
- Dealing with an insolvent company
- Access on-demand
- Dispute resolution, procedures and disaster prevention and recovery planning.
- The trialling of Simone Hill as legal advisor
- The Association magazine changed to a new format
- The redevelopment of the website as an industry portal and the purchase of [www.selfstoage.co.nz](http://www.selfstoage.co.nz)
- New marketing brochures
- Maxine Poulton was confirmed as Executive Officer

Elaine recalls that every week Robert was on conference calls to members and Board Members because in those days there was someone from every state on the Board.

A funny story at the time relating to Joe Barbaro from Homestead Press. He was on the Board representing the ACT and it was decided the ACT wasn't big enough to have a representative. The ACT then became part of NSW. Joe recounts the story with great humour as the day he was given the sack.

Over the years there have been many changes, and Elaine said that the Association has become more and more professional. In the early days at every convention storage owners from the US were invited to attend as they were seen to have a greater knowledge of the industry. Now as the industry has grown, it can stand on its own feet and be proud of the accomplishments it has had. Most of which came from the foundation members 30 years ago. ●

