

WORONI

The Australian National University Student Newspaper since 1950

Meeting Minutes

**Annual General Meeting
30th April 2015
Manning Clarke Theatre 4, ANU**

Present: Alex Catalan-Flores (Chair), Abigail Widijanto, Mitchell Scott, Giordi Borzuola, Katherine Lee, Muhammed Taufiq Suraidi, Michael Petterson, Ria Pflaum, James Waugh, Simone Proctor, Jacob Ingram, Beatrice Smith, Alex Catalan-Flores, Sophie Yates, Ellen Stokes, Benedicte O'Leary-Rutherford, Gareth Chee, Rashna Farrukh, Hugh McCarthy, Eben Leifer, Jessie Power, Geve Schirrpe, Gus McManus, Paroksh Prasad, Josh Orchard, Waheed Jayhoon, Anna Kaufmann, Zach Mackey, Paul Dickson, Shabbir Khanbhai, James Barrett, Maddalena Easterbrook.

Apologies: None

Alex opened the meeting at 1:20

As per Section 10.4 Alex passed the Chair to Jacob Ingram

ITEM 1: Acknowledgement of Country

Beatrice acknowledged the Ngunnawal & Ngambr peoples, the traditional custodians of the land and paid respect to the elders, past & present, noting that sovereignty has not been ceded.

ITEM 2: Accepting Minutes from 2014 AGM

MOTION: That the Association accepts the minutes from the 24th September 2014 Special General Meeting.

Moved: Beatrice Smith
Seconded: Rashna Farrukh

Votes for: 32 (Unanimous)

Motion passed.

ITEM 3: Editor-in-Chief's Report – Alex Catalan-Flores (Appendix 1)

Alex read out the Executive Summary of the report and took the rest as read.

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No Questions were asked.

MOTION: That the Association accepts the Editor-in-Chief's Report.

Moved: Abigail Widijanto
Seconded: Eben Leifer

Votes for: 31
Votes against: 0
Abstain: James Waugh

Motion passed.

ITEM 4: Managing Editor's Report – Abigail Widijanto (Appendix 2)

Abigail took the report mostly as read as it had been available online preceding the meeting. She summarised the report, highlighting the changed procedure surrounding expenses, ANUSM's main sources of income, and the new financial procedures that have been developed since last year as an outcome of the Financial report and Governance review and the merging of ANUSA, PARSA and ANUSM financial administration to a single auditing service and one shared bookkeeper.

MOTION: That the Association accepts the Managing Editor's Report

Moved: Waheed Jayhoon
Seconded: Michael Pettersson

Votes for: 30
Votes against: 0
Abstentions: James Waugh and one other

Motion passed.

ITEM 5: Draft Budget Report – Abigail Widijanto (Appendix 3)

Abigail informed the room that this draft budget had been adopted by the Board. The relevant pages were 6 and 7, which highlighted that the Association proposed to spend 3.3% less money and the bid had increased by 6.16%.

Jacob reminded the audience that questions could be asked.

MOTION: That the Association accepts the Draft Budget Report

Moved: Giordi Borzuola

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Seconded: Mitchell Scott

Motion Passed Unanimously.

ITEM 6: Duly Audited Annual Financial Statements (Appendix 4)

Abigail brought the room's attention to page 4, which highlighted ANUSM's surpluses of last year and the year before.

She took the rest of the report as read.

No questions were asked.

MOTION: That the Association accepts the Duly Audited Financial Statements

Moved: Beatrice Smith

Seconded: Michael Pettersson

Motion Passed Unanimously.

ITEM 7: Election of a Grievances and Disputes Panel Member and Notification of Board's appointment to Panel

Jacob informed the room that the Board's appointee is Polly Mitton and the Board has already approved her.

Kathy Lee was the only nomination for this meeting. Jacob declared Kathy elected with acclamation.

Jacob passed the Chair to Abigail

ITEM 8: Special Resolution concerning the ANUSM Constitution (Appendix 5)

MOTION: That the Association accepts the suggested Constitutional Amendments

Jacob: These resolutions are designed to make the organisation more efficient and to ensure that we have the proper people for roles on the ANUSM Board.

Jacob outlined the proposed changes:

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7.3.2 Changed to specify the Editor-in-Chief, the Deputy Editor and the Managing Editor as Executive Officers. They have been colloquially referred to as the executive as long as I have been involved with Woroni. This change is about creating a specific group to manage the admin side of Woroni.

7.4.1 Changed to include Executive Officers. The Board is still horizontal, and all Directors still have the same vote. No editor takes precedence over another. This is about clarifying roles.

7.4.2 Changes to Role of deputy Editor in Chief. Currently the constitution requires the Deputy editor to keep a record of every contribution anyone makes. With 40-50 articles going online a week in addition to things in the paper, videography, photography etc., 100s and 100s of things come out every fortnight and it's impractical for the Deputy Editor-in-Chief to keep a record of that. The purpose of that record was so that when people nominated for the position of editor, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief would go and check their record. We're changing that so it's retrospective. Rather than keeping a record, at the time of somebody nominating, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief will look back on the contributions they have made. They still have to make 3 contributions and there is still Board oversight. It would be very simple i.e. having on the nomination form a space for nominees to write the title of their contributions which the Deputy Editor-in-Chief could check. Its not practical and quite frankly its impossible at the moment.

We're also changing it so that the Deputy Editor-in-Chief manages electoral affairs, except those which are managed by the returning officer. That's already well established practice, and I'm in the practice of doing that now with our returning officer. This is to ensure that future Deputy Editors-in-Chief take up that role automatically because the Constitutional requirement is not very strenuous.

We also have liaising with stakeholders in preparation for general meetings. Last meeting was quite chaotic and we're trying to move that forward to ensure it's a constitutional requirement to be fully prepared for general meetings.

And an alphabetical change to G.

7.5. Again a change to Executive.

7.6.5 The largest shift we're making. It calls for direct election of the Managing Editor. The philosophy is that not many people run for the Board thinking they're going to be doing the books or managing the

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finances. So in the past it has been palmed off. People don't expect to have that role. The reason for these changes is that we can get someone who knows that their role will be to manage the finances of the Association. This will lead to better outcomes for the person who applies because they expected the position, who will know their specific role, and better outcomes for the Board because they get someone who is qualified and can do it.

So this section is addressing that. It means that someone will nominate for General Editor or Managing Editor. There will be three General Editors and one Managing Editor getting elected in one election, and at the second election there will be four General Editors elected.

These changes will not be applied to this coming election.

7.6.6 and 7.6.7 are numerical changes

7.6.8 Changes reported to acknowledge contributions as I said before.

7.7.1 Election for office bearers just sets the Managing editor's term for twelve months. Rather than having three elections within the board, this just says that the Managing Editor is the Managing Editor on election.

Casual Vacancy nomination period. We feel that that is a long requirement for us because while we have no editor we're taking on that workload and it slows things down. We're keeping it at one week because students need adequate time to consider. We would like to be able to consider applicants faster.

16.4 Changes the requirement for two members to vote for a secret ballot in a Board meeting to one because we think that any editor should be able to request that because it allows them to express their opinions fully and frankly. We work closely together, so if people want that privacy we think they should be able to have that.

19F Record of published contributions. This is the same thing. Rather than the deputy editor keeping a record it will be retrospective.

27.1 That a member of the grievances and disputes panel can be elected at a general meeting, not just at an AGM. The reason is that at the last AGM panel members weren't elected which means that when constitutional problems and disputes came up they were just left lying. We would like to be able to, if a Board forgets to put in place a panel, we'd like to be able to hold a meeting. There is a requirement that it happens at an AGM, but this is a safety clause in case it doesn't. We'll be setting up a formal grievances

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and disputes panel involving Polly Mitton, Kathy Lee and likely to be Roxanne Missingham. They'll be for a year and then it will swap over for the next board.

And we are updating our Press Council Principle. The Australian Press Council has updated their guidelines so we're updating ours as well. That was a part of the constitution.

Taufiq Suraidi: In regards to 7.4.2, does the burden of proof now lie on the nominee?

Jacob: Yes, that's correct. So they would just name three contributions. It depends how it would be interpreted by the Deputy Editor at that time in line with constitutional requirements, but yes that's correct. My term ends in a month so it doesn't apply to me, but what I'm expecting is that they will look back over contributions. It's very black and white whether you've made three, either you've made three or you haven't. And that's still subject to Board oversight.

Taufiq: With regards to transparency and safeguarding, I'm referring to the Woroni website as well, we are safe to say all that process is transparent?

Jacob: Yes, that has to go to the returning officer and is subject to Board oversight too. The Deputy Editor has to report to the Board, so the Board has to approve it and also the returning officer. It's very simple for someone to name three contributions; the Deputy Editor looks back through the more informal records such as the website and radio records, rather than having to record all contributions.

Taufiq: And with regards to contributions, are they publicly available?

Jacob: Yes.

James Barrett: I wouldn't know if it was a good idea unless I had experience on the Board, so as far as you are aware, does this have the support of the Board?

Alex: The changes as a whole, or specific ones?

James: All of them, but for instance, section 16.4 – the vote of one person to request a secret ballot. Maybe sometimes it would be a good idea to have some transparency, but I don't know how the votes work on the Board, or if it is an issue.

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Alex: The issue is that as a Board everything is minuted and then public. When it comes to specific issues when we want to express ourselves frankly, or have a conscience vote, then there is pressure when we have to do that publicly. Most people feel comfortable, but a lot would prefer secrecy. The result would still be public, what would be secret would be the identity of each Board member and how they voted.

Jacob: These changes went to the Board and were passed unanimously before they were brought to you.

Taufiq: In regards to 7.7.3, the longer period is understandable. Why is this change happening? The casual vacancy is taking the place of the Editor, is there an extra vote during those weeks?

Alex: That's the issue. When there is a vacancy there are only seven people to make decisions and majorities become 4 or 5. The explanation is a balancing act. As a Board to not have a member for two weeks is complicated because it puts pressure on everyone. It is our opinion that one week is ample time because being on the Board takes between 15-30 hours a week. If there is a problem with submitting an application within that period, maybe the nominees should consider if they are already overcommitted. Maybe if they can't submit an application they should reconsider. To leave it for two weeks is opening gates for people to overcommit and not fulfill duties.

Taufiq: Is there a responsibility to let as many students know as possible?

Alex: Yes, we still have to make it very public for one week.

Simone Proctor: The constitution allows for a period of four weeks; two weeks for nominations and two weeks for the Board to decide. I would ask why you are considering shortening the nomination period and not the period the Board has to consider because if it's going to be three weeks anyway and they're going to become a full Board member, shouldn't they have the same amount of time they would in a general election?

Alex: By means of correction, we have to open it for two weeks, but we don't have to consider for two weeks.

Simone: That is what the constitution allows for though.

Alex: We could make it the one week, but that still means we have two weeks where we don't have a board member.

Jacob: That's a maximum time. We would choose as soon as possible.

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Abby: Are there any other questions?

Abby requested speakers for and against the resolution.

No speakers volunteered.

Moved: Jacob Ingram

Seconded: Alex Catalan-Flores

Votes for: 31

Votes Against: 0

Abstentions: Taufiq

Motion Passed

Abby passed the chair to Jacob Ingram

Jacob: Is there any other business? Or questions in general?

Shabbir Khanbhai: What is bad debt in the financial report?

Alex: I was Managing Editor last semester. Bad debts were payments that didn't come through to us for advertising etc. For example there was an instance where Phoenix club burnt down and they had a debt with us which we forgave. But we still have to account for it.

Simone: A lot of students have had concerns recently about Woroni's use of anonymity, particularly on StalkerSpace.

Jacob: I'm aware

Simone: For the purposes of transparency, and for students who aren't at our AGM, could you please tell us about things the Board might be doing in regards to a policy on anonymity or tell us whether there are any processes in place?

Jacob: I'm drafting a bylines policy now that will go before the Board.

Alex: With regards to anonymity. Its an issue every publication struggles with because anonymity is a privilege and not a right, and that's how the Board sees it. In terms of a formal document, we don't have one. And that is one of the problems we have faced. We are trying to come up with guidelines now to correct these holes in our processes. At the moment, the editors know who all anonymous writers are, and we ask why? They provide an

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explanation and then we consider it. It is on a very case by case basis now, and I have been researching how other publications deal with it. If we do have whistleblowers, we want something set in stone to deal with it. That is what I'm focusing on now.

James: What would the casual vacancy involve?

Jacob: You would be filling the vacancy left by Janis Lejins on the Board of Editors. That doesn't necessarily come with the Creative Director role. You can send applications to contact@woroni.com.au.

James: When does the term end?

Jacob: At the election of the next Board, so a month and a bit.

Alex: Leaving it for two weeks leaves a situation where you come and leave quickly. There's a notice on the website, and requirements are there.

Joshua Orchard: What is the policy around disclosure of political affiliations?

Jacob: I half answered Simone's question there. I'm drafting a policy now.

Alex: It was an unwritten rule that we would disclose affiliation where it was relevant or where the reader needed to know e.g. about politics. We have had problems with that, and everyone is aware of the StalkerSpace debacles. The Board is looking at the possibility of a broader application. Full information doesn't hurt anyone.

Michael Pettersson: How would you identify them? Is it up to people to disclose themselves?

Alex: We can't double check with everyone, and so it's about the writers disclosing themselves. It's a risk they take with their readers.

Jacob: The editor or sub-editor should ask. People won't lie.

Sophie: We've been operating by asking writers and making investigations. Where there might be an affiliation, we follow up and insist it be acknowledged. Sometimes that falls through the net, but generally we make enquiries ourselves.

There were no more questions.

Jacob closed the meeting at 1:47pm.