

Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: 16 December 2009 Time: 6pm (AEDST)
Venue: Clarendon Hotel, Sydney

(Meeting opened 6.15pm)

Items for Discussion

Confirmation of members attending, apologies

- 11 members attended (see attached list)
- 28 members offered apologies (see attached list)

Notification of proxies

- 28 sent their proxies to member attendees (see attached list)

Minutes of 2008 AGM

- Tim Thwaites moved to accept minutes; David Ellyard seconded → motion carried

President's Report

- (see attached report for details)
- David Ellyard moved a vote of thanks to Tim Thwaites for all that Tim achieved as President and for being a font of ideas and energy over the past two years
- Tim Thwaites moved a vote of thanks to Kali Madden for all her help with membership, website development and many other things.

Treasurer's Report

Presentation of statement of accounts

- ASC has less money than in 2008 because of:
 - increased spending on special projects (face-to-face meeting of National Council, Hot Air symposia)
 - reduced membership subscriptions.
- Adam Selinger asked if losses to budget would be an issue in the longer term.
 - David Ellyard and Tim Thwaites explained that expenditure and use of some funds provided by the World Conference of Science Journalists was planned. The fixed costs of running ASC are met by subscriptions, and any other spending is covered by discretionary funds (like that gained through WCSJ). Agreed that ASC needs to consider how to secure finances over the longer term, especially for a paid Executive.
- Herma Buttner asked about costs of the ASC conference (to be held in February 2010).
 - David Ellyard responded that the organisation was looking to break even at least.



- David Ellyard moved to accept both audited reports subject to a few minor entry changes; Jesse Shore seconded → motion carried

Determination of annual membership fee

- David Ellyard moved to retain the current membership fee (\$80 + GST); TT seconded → motion carried.

Determination of capitation to be returned to branches

- Toss Gascoigne moved on the current capitation at 10% with another 10% available to branches on a bidding basis; Jesse Shore seconded → motion carried

Determination of honoraria

- Tim Thwaites suggested that the President in future also be awarded an honorarium.
- Toss Gascoigne moved that, honoraria of \$1000 each be paid annually to the President, Treasurer and Secretary; JM seconded → motion carried

Appointment of auditor

- David Ellyard moved that John Gigis & Co be retained as auditors; Tim Thwaites seconded → motion carried

Appointment of public officer

- The public officer must be resident in the ACT. The incumbent, David Salt, is stepping down. Some ACT members are interested, but ASC needs to clarify if a post office box is a legitimate address for such purposes.
- agreed to defer decision to the first meeting of the new ASC National Council

Tabling of 2010 budget

- agreed to defer to the first meeting of the new ASC National Council

Election of 2010 ASC President

- one nomination received: Jesse Shore
- attendees all voted in favour of electing Jesse Shore as 2010 ASC President
- (see attached speech from incoming President)

Any other business

- Jenni Metcalfe moved a vote of thanks to Will Rifkin for his work in assisting with Hot Air Symposia.

(Meeting concluded at 7.15pm)

Australian Science Communicators
Annual General Meeting
Attendees

LAST	FIRST	MEMBER?
August	John	1
Boleyn	Tilly	1
Buttner	Herma	1
Ellyard	David	1
Gascoigne	Toss	1
Metcalf	Jenni	1
Mullane	Brigid	1
Rifkin	Will	1
Selinger	Adam	1
Shore	Jesse	1
Thwaites	Tim	1
TOTALS:		11

The following non-members also observed the AGM:

- Pahia Cooper
- Steve Yannoulatos
- Clare Faroujia

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Apologies and Proxies

LAST	FIRST	MEMBER?	PROXY TO
Alcock	Don	1	Meg Rive
Brooker	Sarah	1	Meg Rive
Campbell	Anne	1	Meg Rive
Catchpole	Heather	1	Meg Rive
Coulter	Liese	1	Meg Rive
Davis	Lara	1	Jenni Metcalfe
Dooley	Phil	1	Jenni Metcalfe
Harris	Annie	1	Meg Rive
Kingsland	Ross	1	Meg Rive
Kreuter	Allan	1	Meg Rive
Lamberts	Rod	1	Jenni Metcalfe
Leigh	Alison	1	Jenni Metcalfe
Longnecker	Nancy	1	Meg Rive
Major	Jason	1	Meg Rive
Miles	Laura	1	Meg Rive
Mobbs	Karen	1	Meg Rive
Morrison	Rob	1	Meg Rive
Mussared	David	1	Jenni Metcalfe
Pearce	Stefanie	1	Meg Rive
Pockley	Peter	1	Tim Thwaites
Rive	Meg	1	Jenni Metcalfe
Savill	Jo	1	Meg Rive
Searle	Suzette	1	Meg Rive
Stutchbury	Robyn	1	Meg Rive
Thomas	Abigail	1	Meg Rive
Trudinger	Melissa	1	Meg Rive
Young	Janine	1	Meg Rive
Yuncken	Liz	1	Meg Rive
TOTAL:		28	

Australian Science Communicators

Annual General Meeting

President's Report

I don't have to tell you that the need for science communication has never been greater

- (i) In the year of the great swine 'flu epidemic
- (ii) Just have to look at the quality of debate on both sides of the house over climate change
 - a. On the one hand you have a Government that can't properly articulate its emissions trading scheme to the electorate
 - b. On the other side a bunch of sceptics, deniers, and those who proclaim we can do it all without really changing our ways or spending much money have taken over

To me, that all argues for a strong professional organisation to support and boost the skills of science communicators, to accredit communication courses, and to discuss communications issues

- (i) But it won't happen until we gain some means of financial independence, and can afford a paid secretariat
- (ii) While I would be the first to admit that I'm neither a born leader nor a efficient manager, it is becoming more and more difficult to operate an organisation such as ASC on what is essentially a voluntary basis—particularly for volunteers who are self-employed
- (iii) Don't have to tell you that it is difficult enough for the volunteers at the regional branch level—almost impossible at the national level

In spite of all that, I am pleased to report some real highlights this year

- (i) Web site
 - a. Now have a working interactive website—on which we can build for the future
 - b. Should provide us with means to communicate across this wide Brown land
 - c. Thanks to mainly James Hutson in the Victorian branch (ably backed by Laura Miles and Kali Madden)
- (ii) Automation of membership has been achieved
 - a. A dream of David Ellyard and several others
 - b. Not without its glitches
 - c. Thanks again to Kali Madden, who has worked herself into the ground almost literally to get it off the ground
- (iii) Face to face meeting of the National Council in Canberra in May
 - a. Really useful interaction—forced us to take a reality check, confront issues, especially money
 - b. Got people together
 - c. One of my pledges on stepping down as President and after the conference is to now take that material and begin to turn it into reality
- (iv) Skype

- a. Managed to gradually move to Skype for our teleconference hook-ups
- b. Not ideal—are some glitches
- c. Huge advantage of being free—as opposed to more than \$1000 a year in fees
- d. Improving and flexible
- (v) Hot Air symposia
 - a. Organised by past president Jenni Metcalfe of the Queensland branch
 - b. We've had two goes at it already—in association with Greenhouse '09 conference in Perth in March and Intecol conference in Brisbane in August
 - c. Number three will happen at the ASC National Conference at ANU this February, speakers such as Will Steffen, executive director of the ANU Climate Change institute who will be able to report directly from Copenhagen, the ABC's Sarah Clarke, who is also in Copenhagen and Richard Gilmore, executive director of Earthwatch
 - d. At the end of it all we will be publishing a guide to good practice
- (vi) National Science Communication Strategy
 - a. ASC contributed to the process
 - b. Used interactive technology
 - c. Many members took part—a great discussion emerged
 - d. Will see what it produces—there is to be a report at the conference in Canberra
- (vii) Branches—SA, Victoria
 - a. Resurrection of the SA branch
 - b. Meetings are being held at RiAus
 - c. Other branches have organised many useful activities—e.g. Victoria successful networking event and several really good small sessions
 - d. ACT—a successful Stem Cells in the Pub event
- (viii) Conference
 - a. Is finally coming together
 - b. Starting with Bushfires in the Pub event on Sunday 7 February, 1st anniversary of Victoria's Black Saturday
 - c. Opening plenary with science generators to be webcast and interactive
 - d. Hot Air, more than 30 papers on the latest research into science communication
 - e. Sessions and workshops on science and the arts, evaluation of science communication, new media and engaging politicians
- (ix) Travel
 - a. Think I have visited most regional branches in the past year +
 - i. Certainly SA, WA, ACT, Queensland
 - ii. This is my first (and last) visit to NSW as president

I would like to finish by thanking the many people who contribute to ASC at a national level—and some of you are in this room

- (i) Start with Kali Madden, who has worked like a Trojan, put up with heaps, and still manages to crack a smile on Skype.

- (ii) All those on the National Council
- (iii) Laura Miles and James Hutson for their enthusiasm and commitment to generating the basis for a revamped ASC
- (iv) Thanks also to Niall Byrne and Sarah Brooker who acted as back stops and sources of advice and ideas
- (v) Also thanks to Phil Dooley and Jesse Shore who organised this AGM
- (vi) Finally to the members of the national executive, who all put in many hours on ASC-related business—David, Jenni, Rob Morrison and Meg who, for all her self-deprecating banter, is an amazingly efficient secretary and who at short notice, when I became ill, was left with Ruth Pitt and Claire Harris to organise the Face to Face meeting.

Tim Thwaites
16 December 2009

Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 August 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
Income		
Full Memberships	25,253.80	21,674.60
Miscellaneous income		3,061.00
WCSJ Income	83,706.85	
Interest received	75.31	86.81
Total income	109,035.96	24,822.41
Expenses		
Administration Charges	2,184.51	1,811.89
Annual Report		171.00
Bookkeeping/ Audit Fees	590.91	550.00
Bank Charges	5.00	7.50
Credit Card Merchant Fees	132.00	181.40
Capitation	1,698.20	5,358.51
Elists	941.64	448.00
Honoraria		
Honoraria: Scope	1,300.00	
Honoraria: Treasurer	1,000.00	
Secretariat Management	3,011.65	11,148.27
Membership Officer	2,500.00	
Projects		1,999.99
Telephone, Fax teleconferences	578.13	573.28
WCSJ	23,903.62	
Website	2,770.00	3,908.75
Travel, accom & conference	1,353.04	1,234.04
Total expenses	41,968.70	27,392.63
Profit from ordinary activities before income tax	67,067.26	(2,570.22)
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Net profit attributable to the association	67,067.26	(2,570.22)
Total changes in equity of the association	67,067.26	(2,570.22)
Opening retained profits	1,194.96	3,765.18
Net profit attributable to the association	67,067.26	(2,570.22)
Closing retained profits	68,262.22	1,194.96

Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 August 2009

	2009 \$	2008 \$
Income		
Full Memberships	18,898.95	25,253.80
WCSJ Income		83,706.85
Projects Income	13,309.28	
Interest received	183.78	75.31
Total income	32,392.01	109,035.96
Expenses		
Administration Charges	1,534.82	2,184.51
Annual Report	493.00	
Bookkeeping/ Audit Fees		590.91
Bank Charges	7.50	5.00
Credit Card Merchant Fees	323.80	132.00
Capitation	9,246.00	1,698.20
Elists	236.00	941.64
Honoraria		
Honoraria	2,000.00	
Honoraria: Scope		1,300.00
Honoraria: Treasurer		1,000.00
Secretariat Management	1,278.73	3,011.65
Membership Officer		2,500.00
Projects	22,437.64	
Training	8,390.19	
Telephone, Fax teleconferences	1,499.45	578.13
Conference Call Costs	118.56	
WCSJ		23,903.62
Website	5,567.00	2,770.00
Travel, accom & conference	1,488.07	1,353.04
Total expenses	54,620.76	41,968.70
Profit (loss) from ordinary activities before income tax	(22,228.75)	67,067.26
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	(22,228.75)	67,067.26
Total changes in equity of the association	(22,228.75)	67,067.26
Opening retained profits	68,262.22	1,194.96
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	(22,228.75)	67,067.26
Closing retained profits	46,033.47	68,262.22

Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Incoming President's Acceptance Speech

I'm very pleased to be elected President of the ASC for 2010. We have an interesting year ahead and we have much to acknowledge and thank the previous president, Tim Thwaites, for his two years in office and particularly for his many contributions in 2009. These include guiding us to develop the ASC vision statement, supporting the revamping of the ASC website and leading a productive process to gain input from the members and then writing the ASC submission to the National Science Communication Strategy. I especially applaud his efforts, with his team of contributors, to develop, and soon deliver, the exciting program for the ASC national conference to be held in February 2010 in Canberra. Tim now takes on the role as 'Past President', replacing Jenni Metcalfe.

I take great pleasure in thanking Jenni Metcalfe for her role as Past President and look forward to her continuing contribution as a very active member of the ASC. Her Hot Air Symposium will be a featured part of our conference.

I thank members of the 2009 National Council for their efforts and I look forward to working with the new National Council starting with its first meeting in early 2010.

I also thank the continued efforts of the secretariat, Kali Madden. The ASC is fortunate to have such an enthusiastic and effective person in this role.

Tim has previously mentioned a number of opportunities and challenges facing the ASC in 2010. Rather than reiterate his insightful points I'll just say that I hope we can make progress together in realising our potentials and helping to ensure the long term future for the organisation. Thank you once again for electing me as the new President.

Jesse Shore
16 December 2009