

# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting 2016-17 Agenda

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**Date:** 22 February 2017                      **Start time:** 6.00pm (ACDT)

**Venue:** Historian Hotel, 18 Coromandel Place, Adelaide SA

## Items for Discussion

1. Confirmation of members attending, apologies
2. Notification of proxies
3. Minutes of 2015 AGM
4. President's report
5. Treasurer's report
  - a) presentation of statement of accounts
  - b) determination of annual membership fee
  - c) determination of capitation to be returned to branches
  - d) determination of honoraria
  - e) appointment of auditor
  - f) appointment of public officer
  - g) preview of 2017 budget
6. Election of 2017 ASC President
7. Any other business

# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Minutes 2016-17

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**Date:** 22 February 2017                      **Start time:** 6.00pm (ACDT)

**Venue:** Historian Hotel, 18 Coromandel Place, Adelaide SA

*[Meeting opened at 6.30pm]*

Meeting chaired by Joan Leach as President and facilitated by Sarah Lau as Secretary.

## Items for Discussion

### 1. Confirmation of members attending, apologies

- 23 members attended with voting rights, 1 member attended as an observer (see attached list)
- 7 members offered apologies and 6 members registered proxies.

### 2. Notification of proxies

6 members sent their proxies to member attendees (see attached list).

### 3. Minutes of 2015 AGM

- Phil Dooley moved to accept minutes; Michael Mills seconded → motion carried, minutes accepted

### 4. President's report

- *Please see the attached report.*
- It is wonderful to be meeting in Adelaide for this AGM and Conference.
- Our last AGM was a very in-depth affair – we needed to address many key issues for the ASC, including our financial reporting and taxation liabilities, along with increasing our memberships.
- I am very pleased that we have been able to keep ASC strong and successful.
- Our biggest event in the past year was the Brisbane 2016 conference during the World Science Festival.
  - We saw many 'new faces' and this generational change – attracting a broader group of people to ASC – is important for promoting new ideas and growing the science communication community.
- We also initiated, thanks to Kali Madden, the 'Meet the Member' series, which has been very well-received.
  - These conversations are recorded and form a useful library for other science communicators.
- ASC also took over the World Federation of Science Journalists' (WFSJ) Twitter account this year, during the Sydney Science Writers' Festival
  - ASC is a member of WFSJ
  - We have seen an uptick again in science journalism members in the past year
- The diversity of our organisation is important – we are strong due to the many different types of people in the organisation, from researchers to practitioners, in very different fields and settings
  - We should continue to attract this diversity of members, especially as we start to see more people interested in science communication
  - We should be lumpers, not splitters

- I would like to thank Kali Madden for outstanding work and services to and on behalf of Australian Science Communicators
- Phil Dooley moved to accept President's Report; Jenni Metcalfe seconded → motion carried

## 5. Treasurer's report

- *Please see the attached report. Pete Wheeler as Treasurer reported to the AGM via the AnyMeeting web meeting.*
- At the last AGM, we were very close to insolvency, but the decisive action of the Executive, National Council and AGM attendees meant that the actions we resolved to undertake stopped this from happening.
- Overall, ASC's income for the 2015/16 financial year was \$100,446.46.
  - Our income came primarily from ticket sales, sponsorship and memberships.
- Overall, ASC's expenditure for the 2015/16 financial year was \$108,972.00
  - Costs included the Executive Officer's salary, the conference costs and regulatory and compliance costs
- ASC's finances are in good health and we are already forecasting beyond meeting our ATO liability and into the future.
- Since the increase to membership fees was introduced at the beginning of 2016, the rate at which members renew their membership before it expires has increased slightly from 32% to 33%.
- ASC has 495 members comprising 239 individual members, 63 student members, 47 associate members, 6 lifetime members and 14 corporate members (with 59 individuals currently recorded against corporate membership).
- The Executive decided to introduce advertising space in Scope, and this revenue is now paying for the cost of distribution.
- After the last AGM, ASC de-registered for GST, which has already resulted in considerable cost savings.
- Looking ahead, the ASC Executive needs to work to retain and grow our member base, while reducing our cost base.
- Phil Dooley: so our members are still positive even with the membership fee increase?
  - Kali Madden: Yes, and we have also seen a change in the tone of incoming correspondence to ASC
- Pete Wheeler moved to accept the Treasurer's report; Phil Dooley seconded → motion carried

### a. presentation of statement of accounts

- Suzette Searle moved to accept the statement of accounts for the past financial year; Craig Cormick seconded → motion carried

### b. determination of annual membership fee

- Pete Wheeler moved that there are no increases to the membership fees and recommended that the fee not be increased in line with CPI this year, given the significant fee increase last financial year.
- The AGM attendees discussed the benefits and challenges of adjusting the membership fee in line with CPI, including:
  - Small gradual increases are generally more palatable than increasing by a more significant amount infrequently
  - The challenges of implementing the CPI increase and whether a 'grace period' should be considered
- It is recommended that the incoming ASC Executive consider the sentiments expressed by the AGM and decide on an appropriate course of action, weighing the potential benefits against the practicalities of implementation and member sentiment.
- Pete Wheeler moved to set the annual membership fee at \$185 for members and \$85 for student and associate members; Joan Leach seconded → motion carried

### c. determination of capitation to be returned to branches

- Pete Wheeler moved that the capitation arrangements remain unchanged, with 10% of membership fees going to branches that are constitutional, and another 10% for each branch being retained in a central pool.

- Branches must be constitutional to receive the base level of capitation (i.e. have an elected President) and provide a very simple annual financial update to the National Treasurer.
  - The AGM discussed the rationale for this structure and why this would have previously been introduced.
    - Some members expressed their disappointment that this funding is not immediately available for branches to use.
    - There was a concern that this model of having to apply for extra funding is onerous and could be dissuading branches from applying.
    - Branches should feel empowered to deliver member benefits.
    - Previous Executive members explained that in the past, there have been cases of capitation going to inactive branches – this model was adopted by the Executive for better financial management and accountability.
  - The 10% pool is available for any branches to bid for, and should be used to grow the member base and provide clear member benefits.
    - It can be accessed via a submission to the Executive.
  - In recent years, it has been very rare for branches to apply for this funding, and in some cases branches have turned down the annual base level 10% they are eligible for.
  - The expenditure estimates and commitments in the Treasurer’s report covers capitation arrangements and the ATO liability.
  - This matter is to be discussed at the first National Council meeting to follow the AGM. Branches are invited to make a bid for additional funding at that meeting.
  - Pete Wheeler moved that capitation arrangements remain unchanged for the ASC financial year; Joan Leach seconded → motion carried
- d. determination of honoraria**
- Pete Wheeler noted that the following honoraria are payable, in recognition of those who take on these roles:
    - Honoraria of \$1000 each payable to the President, Secretary and Treasurer
    - Honoraria of \$500 each payable to the two grants program co-managers
  - Pete Wheeler moved that honoraria arrangements are continued; Phil Dooley seconded → motion carried
- e. appointment of auditor**
- The Treasurer and Executive Officer will discuss the appointment of an auditor next week.
  - Therefore the motion to appoint an auditor is deferred.
- f. appointment of public officer**
- Pete Wheeler moved to appoint Suzette Searle as the Public Officer; Heather Bray seconded → motion carried
- g. preview of 2017 budget**
- With the election of a new President, the budget will be reviewed to check alignment with the priority activities he wishes to pursue.
  - We currently have approximately outstanding costs of \$37,000 associated with the conference, and another approximately \$30,000 of expenses by the end of the financial year.
  - It is expected that the ATO liability will be cleared by the following AGM.
  - Pete Wheeler moved to present the budget at the next National Council meeting; Craig Cormick seconded → motion carried
- Joan Leach moved a vote of thanks to Pete Wheeler for his work as Treasurer, which was endorsed by all attendees.
- 6. Election of 2017 ASC President**
- Dr Craig Cormick has been nominated for the 2017 ASC President.
  - Craig Cormick was nominated by Joan Leach and was seconded by Pete Wheeler; Craig accepted the nomination → there being one nomination, Craig Cormick is taken to be elected as ASC President in 2017

- Craig noted his thanks to the previous committees and to Joan as outgoing President for their leadership and guidance of ASC in recent years.
  - He is looking forward to taking on the role and representing all ASC members.
  - 
  - Thanks to the committee for guiding the ASC in recent years
  - Look forward to taking on this role
- Phil Dooley moved a vote of thanks to Sarah Lau for her work as Secretary, which was endorsed by all attendees.

## 7. Any other business

- Jenni Metcalfe moved a vote of thanks to Joan Leach for her work as President over the past two years, which was endorsed by all attendees.

### ASC 2018 Conference

- Kali Madden: The ASC Executive has indicated its intention to accept a bid for the ASC 2018 conference from the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences at the Sydney Powerhouse Museum, most likely to occur between 5 and 8 March 2018.
  - This was the winning bid after ASC introduced a bidding process for its conferences in 2016.
  - Conferences are a significant, profitable activity for the ASC
- A number of attendees raised the point that the Public Communication of Science and Technology Conference (PCST) is in Dunedin in April 2018.
  - Jenni Metcalfe is the Chair of the Dunedin Conference committee.
  - This is the first time since 1994 that the PCST Conference will be held in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Other concerns were raised, including:
  - The dates coincide with the Australian grant-writing season for National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Research Council grants, which would see many members working on these applications and not able to attend events.
  - People are likely to be able to afford only one conference and are likely to choose one of the two (if two conferences were run in the year).
- Toss Gascoigne moved that Executive notes the AGM's preference for the two conferences not to clash and that the ASC explores opportunities for a joint conference instead; Jenni Metcalfe seconded → motion carried
- The incoming ASC Executive noted the concerns expressed at the AGM and will initiate discussions with the Science Communication Association of New Zealand and PCST, as well as seeing whether the dates associated with the Powerhouse bid could be changed, including possibly deferring to 2019.

*Meeting closed at 7.47pm.*

## Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Attendees

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LAST	FIRST	MEMBER?
Metcalfe	Jenni	1
Lau	Sarah	1
Cormick	Craig	1
Leach	Joan	1
Torok	Simon	1
McRae	Jacqui	1
Stevens	Toni	1
Mills	Michael	1
Bagg	Melanie	1
Bamford	Mandy	1
Bamford	Mike	1
Jorgensen-Price	Jesse	1
Clark	Sarah	1
Stevens	Toni	1
Price	Karina	1
King	Adrian	1
Elliott	Susannah	1
Lehane	Kate	1
Bailey	Lisa	1
Harris	David	1
Willis	Paul	1
Smith	Tim	1
Selinger	Adam	1
Madden*	Kali	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>23</b>

\*observer – non-voting

Australian Science Communicators  
Annual General Meeting  
Proxies

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LAST	FIRST	MEMBER?	PROXY TO
Shore	Jesse	1	Sarah Lau
Belcher	Teresa	1	Sarah Lau
Nogrady	Bianca	1	Sarah Lau
Vennell	Chris	1	Toni Stevens
Hutson	James	1	Sarah Lau
Roberson	Tara	1	Sarah Lau
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>6</b>	

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# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting President's Report

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## **ASC President report for Annual General Meeting, 19 November 2015**

Prepared by Joan Leach

While 2015 was a challenging year for getting on top of the ASC's current situation, we end the year with much more clarity than we began.

Looking at last year's minutes, you'll see the issues flagged, but I do also want to acknowledge that we set out (with member support) to start a grants scheme for PD and we did this, with great success.

This year, we have identified weaknesses in the organisation and fixed them. We now have a legal constitution to be lodged with the Registrar General. We have an official audit of the ASC finances and have identified areas where we may need to change or even eliminate suppliers and to revisit our membership dues. We know where we stand financially.

We quickly realised that we needed strategies going forward for the health of the organisation and so we have ended the year with a strategic planning meeting.

So, we finish 2015 with a renewed sense of purpose for the ASC—our national professional organisation for science communicators and science journalists.

I believe the next year will be easier than this year. We are clear-eyed, focused, and even have a bit of energy to take forward.

Australian Science Communicators  
Annual General Meeting  
Treasurer's Report 2015-16

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*P. Wheeler*

Pete Wheeler, ASC Treasurer

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