

# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting 2016-17 Agenda

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**Date:** 19 December 2017                      **Start time:** 6.30pm (AEST)

**Venue:** Whisky Room, Civic Pub, 8 Lonsdale Street, Braddon, Canberra ACT  
Online via Skype

## Items for Discussion

1. Confirmation of members attending, apologies
2. Notification of proxies
3. Minutes of 2016/17 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 2018 budget
6. Election of 2018 ASC Treasurer
7. Any other business
  - a) Unsung hero announcement
  - b) Results of ASC Conference survey

# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Minutes 2017

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**Date:** 19 December 2017      **Start time:** 6.42pm (AEST)  
**Venue:** Skype and Canberra

*[Meeting opened at 6.42pm]*

Meeting chaired by Craig Cormick as President and facilitated by Teresa Belcher as National Secretary. Craig introduced himself.

## Items for Discussion

### 1. Confirmation of members attending, apologies

- 17 members attended with voting rights, 1 member attended as an observer (see attached list)
- 15 members offered apologies and 15 members registered proxies.

### 2. Notification of proxies

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

### 3. Minutes of 2016-17 AGM

- Craig Cormick moved to accept minutes; Jesse Jorgensen-Price seconded → motion carried, minutes accepted

### 4. President's report

- *Please see the attached report.*
- This has been a slow year.
- Do we need to look at more fundamental issues to find ways to work better? More flexible ways to support the state and territory committees. And better return on membership costs and better value for money. And alternative financial models.
- Professional Development day will be held and also a joint conference day with PCST in New Zealand.
- Phil Dooley moved to accept President's Report; Suzette Searle seconded → motion carried

### 5. Treasurer's report

- *Please see the attached report. Pete Wheeler as Treasurer reported to the AGM via Skype*
- 2017 has been a watershed year. After 7 years of effort we are in a good position.
- Income was \$169,651 and increase on \$69,205 from previous year.
- Total equity \$38,792 compared to \$45 in last period.
- Deregistered for GST in 2015/16, but we went over the threshold in 2016/17 due to the conference.
- Craig moved to accept the Treasurer's report; Stuart McMillen seconded → motion carried

#### a. presentation of statement of accounts

- Pete Wheeler moved to accept the statement of accounts for the past financial year; Teresa Belcher seconded → motion carried

#### b. determination of annual membership fee

- Now we are back in the black, are the membership fees too high?

- Pete suggested that while we are healthy now, there will be future expenses (e.g. conferences) that will take money. The increase was about making the association more professional and serving the members. Executive motivated to give value to members
- Phil said the decision to double the fees didn't result in a loss of members, so proposes we don't change them.
- Lisa said that while providing value to members to keep in mind, the conference was perceived as being quite expensive, so consider future events to not be too expensive.
- Pete 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 in 2016.
- 30-31 % steady rate.
- Membership very slightly declined.
- 450 members currently.
- Pete Wheeler moved to retain the annual membership fee at \$185 for members and \$85 for student and associate members; Craig Cormick seconded → motion carried

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

- Ask for a financial snapshot each year from the branches. ACT and NSW have already given their annual snapshot. New Treasurer will need to call for this.
- The other 10% need to have an idea that will benefit members and also provide access to other members. The process is not onerous. The capitation has increased with membership fees.
- Craig says this shows ups and downs of 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.
- Pete Wheeler moved that capitation arrangements remain unchanged for the ASC financial year; Lisa Bailey seconded → motion carried

**d. determination of honoraria**

- Not discussed (carry to 2018 AGM)

**e. appointment of auditor**

- Working with bookkeeper to appoint a suitable auditor.
- Therefore, the motion to appoint an auditor is deferred.

**f. appointment of public officer**

- Phil Dooley moved to appoint Suzette Searle as the Public Officer; Pete Wheeler seconded → motion carried

**g. preview of 2018 budget**

- Will leave to incoming treasurer and executive to have a look at.

**6. Election of 2018 ASC Treasurer**

- No nominations have been received for the 2018 ASC Treasurer.
- We have a plan to ask an accounting student if they would like experience. Phil has volunteered to be interim treasurer.
- Pete says between the work Kali and bookkeeper does, it just taking what is there and running with it. It will be easy to pick up.
- Kali mentioned the CPA pro bono plan. Pete has put the call out a number of times over the years but has never had a response.

**7. Any other business**

### **Professional Development day**

Craig has found someone from Facebook to speak, Jonathon Webb (head of ABC science), Mark Warncken social media guru, Podcase maybe Joel Werner

### **NZ shared event**

Series of 8 min pieces. Brisbane Convention Centre is looking for a host for PCST in Brisbane in 2022.

Officers have all offered to role over. Welcome again Teresa in Secretary, Phil and Lisa as VP and Craig as President.

### **Results from the ASC Conference Survey**

After 2017 did a Survey Monkey, there is a report that Lisa Bailey can send through. People generally liked the conference, in terms of length, enjoyed the interactive sessions. Mixed feeling on 5 minute sessions. Lack of representation from people in media especially journalists. Good to see that the PD is contacting media. Better structured networking to help interactions between new and old members.

### **Unsung Hero Award**

Awarded to Cali Andrews. The timeline occurred around Oct-Nov but would be nice to tie in with a national conference. To make it a more member-facing event. Has been announced through Scope and arranging to get the certificate and award to her. A special commendation to Rod Taylor (Fuzzy Logic science show).

### **ACT Branch**

The ACT Branch asked if they could change the constitution regarding quorum (thought it was 25% of members, but latest constitution says 10%) as they find it very hard to reach the numbers necessary to hold an AGM. There was significant discussion about this. The Constitution and By-Laws state that branches can write their own rules/constitution as long as it is voted and endorsed at a meeting of members.

*Meeting closed at 7.35pm.*

# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting Attendees

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LAST	FIRST	MEMBER?
Cormick	Craig	1
Dooley	Phil	1
Gascoigne	Toss	1
Judd	Karina	1
Lehane	Kate	1
Searle	Suzette	1
McMillen	Stuart	1
Murray	Aidan	1
Campbell	Anne	1
Keys	Sian	1
Jorgensen-Price	Jesse	1
Wong	David	1
Belcher	Teresa (WA)	1
Sullivan	Miriam (WA)	1
Wheeler	Pete (WA)	1
Bailey	Lisa (SA)	1
Roberson	Tara (Qld)	1
Madden*	Kali	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>15</b>

\*observer – non-voting

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Annual General Meeting  
Proxies

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LAST	FIRST	MEMBER?	PROXY TO
Lau	Sarah	1	Teresa Belcher
Ellyard	David	1	Teresa Belcher
Nisselle	Amy	1	Lynette Plenderleith
Sayers	Renae	1	Teresa Belcher
Lourie	Paula	1 (Scitech)	Teresa Belcher
Rowles	Cass	1	Teresa Belcher
Metcalf	Jennifer	1	Toss Gascoigne
Aranda	George	1	Kali Madden
Rowe	Sally	1	Teresa Belcher
Pinkerton	Tamara	1	Teresa Belcher
Gerard	Belinda	1 (Scitech)	Teresa Belcher
Ahmad	Mizam	1	Sian Keys
Feldman	Hannah	1	Jesse Jorgensen-Price
Smith	Cobi	1	Craig Cormick
Bray	Heather	1	Lisa Bailey
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>14 (15*)</b>	

\*Two members were representing the one organisation, Scitech, therefore one vote

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# Australian Science Communicators Annual General Meeting President's Report 2017

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## **ASC President Report**

Prepared by Craig Cormick

This year has been a year of consolidation and also one of scarcity. While the organisation has made great efforts – assisted by our supportive members—to become financially solid, and we have largely maintained membership despite increased fees. We have, however, seen many committees fail to gain quorums for their meetings, and a drop in overall activity at state-level.

The most common reason for this appears to be too many people with too little time, which may both reflect our slowly changing membership, and the slow change to the nature of working lives in Australia.

Of interest, while Post-truth and the need for evidence-based data have often been tipped as the issues to watch out for this year, it may be that we needed to look at more fundamental issues that are preventing us from having the energies to better address these.

So, the year ahead needs to work around these issues.

- We need to find more flexible ways to support and empower the state and territory committees—which is the real heartland of the ASC.
- We need to find ways to provide better return on membership costs for those who join the ASC, and to encourage renewal of membership.
- We need to find alternative financial models than membership fees to keep the organisation financially strong.
- We need to understand the needs of new members, and old members, and try and meet them all.
- And we need to ensure we stay relevant to those who join us.

Towards this we will be holding a Professional Development Day early 2018 in Sydney, concentrating on the types of professional skills that we need to do our jobs better, and later in the year we will be holding a joint conference day with the Science Communicators of New Zealand, following the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) conference in Dunedin in May—which will include a sharing of knowledge and best-practice.

I hope members are able to take advantage of both these opportunities, for if successful we will be able to continue providing more professional services to members, making membership of the ASC a better thing for the organisation and for its members.

Dr Craig Cormick  
President  
ASC

# Australian Science Communicators

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## 2016/17 Annual General Meeting

### Treasurer's Report

#### Summary

2017 has been a watershed year for the Australian Science Communicators association. After several years of effort to address regulatory and financial issues, as of this year, the ASC has a clean bill of health to build and grow from.

This report summarises the annual accounts for 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017.

#### Income

Income for this period derived primarily from membership subscriptions (\$65,669); ticket sales for the 2017 conference (\$95,197); and sponsorship of the 2017 conference (\$7,750).

Overall the association's income for the 2016/17 financial year was \$169,651—an increase of \$69,205 on the previous year.

#### Expenditure

Major expenditure for the year included salary costs for the Executive Officer to deliver the 2017 conference and annual leave (\$63,809); the cost of conference related activities and requirements e.g. marketing, live streaming, catering (\$33,572); the cost of maintaining our online presence and membership management infrastructure (\$7,595); superannuation (\$6,062); and honoraria for executive committee members (\$4,000).

Overall the association's operational expenditure for the 2016/17 financial year was \$127,904—an increase of \$18,932.

#### Assets

At the end of the 2016/17 financial year, the ASC bank accounts held a total balance of \$41,657, and with liabilities of \$2,865 the ASC's total equity at 31 August 2017 was \$38,792.

To put this into context, after liabilities with the ATO of \$19,643 were taken into account, at the end of the 2015/16 financial year the ASC's total equity was just \$45. This liability/debt with the ATO which primarily related to unpaid GST\* was paid off nine months early in April of this year. Because of the ASC's proactivity in this regard, the ATO returned all interest charges and penalty fees associated with the entire debt, a total of \$7,715.

As such, the association's current debt free financial position and regulatory bill of health means the ASC executive has a firm platform to build upon; to drive initiatives and new opportunities that benefit branches and members.

\* The ASC was deregistered for GST for the 2015/16 financial year. During the 2016/17 financial year, due to conference related income, the association reached the \$150k income GST threshold and re-registered effective from 26 August, 2017. As such the ASC must collect GST for a period of 12 months (i.e. the current financial year) and can then deregister if the association's annual income has fallen below the GST threshold once again.

#### Membership Fees

Since the increase to membership fees was introduced at the beginning of 2016, the rate at which members renew their membership has held steady in the range of 31% to 33%, an improvement on the 28% to 30% range seen in years prior.



The current cost of ASC membership is:

- Individual membership – \$189 per annum
- Student membership (with valid student identification) – \$87 per annum
- Associate membership (for retirees, members living overseas, on parental (or other) leave, or otherwise not currently active in science communication) – \$87 per annum
- Corporate membership\* – \$522 per annum

\* Standard Corporate membership offers up to ten employee members for the price of only six Associate memberships, and additional employees at a discounted rate. It includes one vote in ASC elections.

Overall, membership numbers for the ASC have declined slightly since the last AGM most likely due to a postponement of the planned national conference in March 2018 (normally discounted event tickets for members around this time of year boosts member numbers). Currently the association has 450 members (down from 495 at the end of February this year) comprising of 232 individual members (down from 239), 71 student members (up from 63), 40 associate members (down from 47), 7 lifetime members and 16 corporate members (up from 14)—this accounts for up to 160 individuals but fluctuates regularly with staff movement and the time it takes to capture new members, so currently 84 individuals are recorded against corporate membership.

Our corporate members are:

- ANSTO (NSW)
- Australian Academy of Science (AAS) (ACT)
- Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) (VIC)
- Australian National Maritime Museum (NSW)
- Australian Science Media Centre (AusSMC) (SA)
- Biotext (ACT)
- CSIRO (ON Innovation) (NSW)
- Curtin University Science and Engineering Outreach (WA)
- Environment Institute, University of Adelaide (SA)
- Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges (SA)
- Powerhouse Museum (NSW)
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT) (QLD)
- Royal Institution of Australia (RiAus) (SA)
- Science in Public (VIC)
- Scitech (WA)
- Swinburne University of Technology (VIC)

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The remaining pages describe in detail the ASC's income, expenditure and assets for the 2016/17 financial year. I commend this report to this AGM and ask that the accounts for the 2016/17 year be approved and adopted.



**Pete Wheeler, ASC Treasurer**