

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Library Theatre and online, Thursday 30 November, 5.45pm

1. Welcome & Apologies

Attendees

Friends Members:

Marion Amies
Peter Boege
Lyn Curran
Alan Duff
Alex George
Gabrielle Hyslop
Amanda Lynch
Margaret Nichols
Margaret Simmonds
Peter Taft
Stephen Wilks

Catherine Anderson
David Campbell
Anne Davis
Susan Ford
TJ Higgins
Larissa Karpish
Margaret May
Ian Primrose
Michalina Stawyskyj
Susan White

Kerry Blackburn
Nancy Clarke
Melanie Drake
Sue Gage
Peggy Horn
Irene Kaspar
Elizabeth Morrison
Jo Schumann
Arnis Stonis
Jennifer Wilks

Library Staff:

Lauren Conron
Marie-Louise Ayres

Belinda Jessup
Jane Edmon

Stuart Baines
Ben Pratten

Apologies:

Max Bourke
Meredith Hinchliffe
Gary Kent
Mike Pearson
Garth Setchell
Elizabeth Teather
Helena Zobec

Glenn Davidson
Virginia Hole
Peter McDonald
Ana Penteado
Jane Smyth
David Teather

Cameron Hazlehurst
Claudia Hyles
Robyn Oates
Marianne Pietersen
Colin Steele
Kevin White

Chair Margaret Nichols opened the meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country; welcomed members and noted the apologies.

2. Acceptance of the Previous Minutes

The previous minutes were circulated with the meeting papers and were found to be an accurate record of the 2022 AGM.

Moved to accept: Larissa Karpish

Seconded: Peggy Horn

3. Chair's Report

Margaret Nichols provided an overview of the 11 Friends events held so far this year, a mixture of in house, hybrid and online only formats. The White Gloves: Food & Drinks with Friends event was particularly well attended and ran smoothly due to the efforts of Library staff, for which the Friends are grateful.

Margaret noted that membership is slowly increasing, currently at 1,521 from a low in April 2023 of 1,422. The Committee continues to work towards expanding the membership base, though declining membership seems to be a common situation for many similar organisations. Margaret thanked members who have steadfastly retained their membership.

2023 has brought challenges to the Committee, requiring several difficult decisions. As previously advised, the fee structure has been altered and is operational. In an effort to be prudent on members' behalf, it was reluctantly decided to change the newsletter to a digital-only format. Margaret thanked outgoing newsletter editor Kerry Blackburn for her hard work and creativity which made each quarterly newsletter a joy to read. The Committee hopes to continue her high standards.

The Friends' support for the Fellowships has been put into obedience until 2025. These changes were undertaken to ensure the finances will be in a robust situation going forward and will continue to monitor and review the budgetary situation.

Margaret thanked all the 2023 Committee members and noted outgoing members Gary Kent, Kerry Blackburn and Grahame Thom, whose significant contributions and commitment are much appreciated. Margaret noted that she is also stepping down this year. A vote of thanks was also given for Library staff for their support of the Friends - Lauren Conron, Belinda Jessup, Ben Pratten, Grace Blakeley-Carroll, Stuart Baines and Director-General Dr Marie-Louise Ayres.

Motion to accept the Chair's Report: Accepted

4. Financial Report

The audited financial statements for 2022-23 were circulated with the meeting papers. Treasurer Michalina Stawyskyj presented the financial statements prepared by Anthony Wilson of AccountAbility (ACT) Pty Ltd, following an audit of the accounts in accordance with the provisions of the ACT Associations Incorporations Act 1991 and other mandatory reporting requirements. The auditor has issued an unqualified report.

The total cash reserves at 30 June were \$145,503.00 with \$50,000 of that held in a term deposit. The financial position remains stable, though the Committee acknowledges that there have been, and continue to be, a number of challenges to be managed.

These include the lingering impacts of the pandemic which affected membership numbers and hence revenue, including that raised from events. Additionally, the impacts of inflation have meant higher costs for postage, printing, catering and staffing.

As a result, the Committee has taken a number of measures to ensure a sound fiscal position in the future, ensuring the organisation meets its objectives and continues contributing to Library projects.

This has seen a modest increase in membership fees which had not been increased for approximately eight years. The Committee is focusing on restoring membership numbers and has undertaken a membership drive and taken on suggestions from a survey of members. Due to the considerable and increasing costs of postage and printing, the newsletter has been changed to a digital format.

The Committee thanks the Director-General and NLA management for their ongoing support, including through the funding of the Executive Officer. Michalina thanked Lauren Conron and Belinda Jessup, and members of the Finance Subcommittee – Catherine Anderson, Amanda Lynch and Grahame Thom. A vote of thanks was given for Margaret Nichols for her tireless work on behalf of the Friends, and for providing sound and wise guidance throughout the year to all the Subcommittees.

Michalina recommended that the financial statements for the Friends in 2023 be approved.

Moved: Nancy Clarke

Seconded: Sue Gage

5. Proposed Changes to the Rules of Association

The proposed changes were circulated widely to the membership. Margaret moved that the changes be adopted.

The changes were unanimously approved.

6. Fellowships

Margaret announced Celia Craig as the recipient of the 2024 Friends Creative Arts Fellowship. Celia's Fellowship research is titled Complete Accord: Miriam Hyde, and will focus on creating new work for her Tarrawatta Trio.

Ben Pratten, 2020 Staff Travelling Fellow, gave a brief overview of his recent trip to the Communicating the Arts conference in Singapore.

7. Presentation of the Friends Medal

This year marks the 17th year in which the Friends medal has been awarded to recognise the significant contribution to the work of the Library by Friends members or Library staff or volunteers. Margaret announced that this year's Friends Medal recipient is Susannah Helman, recognised for her significant

contributions to the Friends and to the Library over the past 12 years, as a presenter at events and contributor to the Newsletter.

Susannah accepted the award and thanked the Committee members, Library staff and volunteers.

8. Presentation from Dr Marie-Louise Ayres

The Library's Director-General thanked the Friends and outgoing Chair Margaret Nichols. Marie-Louise gave updates on Library activities in 2023, noting the strong position of the Library going forward into 2024 with a secure funding base.

9. Other Business

No other business was raised.

10. Election of the Friends Committee for 2024

All nominees have been confirmed as financial members of the Friends and have submitted the required documentation in support of their nomination. The nominees are Nancy Clarke, Sue Gage, Peggy Horn, Michalina Stawyskyj, Catherine Anderson, Arnis Stonis, Larissa Karpish, Amanda Lynch and Josephine Schumann. The Committee was unanimously elected.

The Chair noted that members may be co-opted to the Committee in accordance with the Rules of Association. Margaret congratulated the successful nominees for the 2024 Committee and closed the meeting, with no further business to discuss.

Meeting closed at 6.30pm