

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Library Theatre and online, Thursday 20 November, 5.30pm

1. Address from Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, Director-General

Co-Chair Michalina Stawyskyj opened the meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country and introduced the Director-General.

Marie-Louise thanked Friends members for being an integral part of the Library community and for the significant contribution of hosting important and long-standing events like collection viewings.

2. Welcome and Apologies

Michalina welcomed members and noted the apologies.

Attendees

Friends Members:

Catherine Anderson
Peter Boege
Nancy Clarke
Michael Falk
Peggy Horn
Larissa Karpish
Margaret May
Elizabeth Nelson
Caroline Polak Scowcroft
Arnis Stonis
Ingrid Moses

Gillian Bellas
Max Bourke
Karen Downing
Susan Ford
T.J. Higgins
Irene Kaspar
Michael McKernan
Margaret Nichols
Anna Robinson
Brian Weir

Anne Davis
Margie Bourke
Robyn Duncan
Sue Gage
J.V. Johnson
Carmel Macpherson
Michalina Stawyskyj
Michael Pearson
Jo Schumann
Irene Wilson

Library Staff:

Lauren Conron
Marie-Louise Ayres

Belinda Jessup

Daniel Gleeson

Apologies:

Christine White
Elizabeth Teather
Judith Robertson
Lynne Curran
Richard White
Wayne Williams

Colin Steele
Gayle Abbott
Julie Beashel
Marion Newman
Robyn Holmes

David Teather
Jo Ferguson
Kevin Judah White
Mark Shields
Thomas Mautner

3. Acceptance of the Previous Minutes

The previous minutes were circulated with the meeting papers and were found to be an accurate record of the 2023 AGM.

Moved to accept: Nancy Clarke

Seconded: Peggy Horn

4. Co-Chair's Report

Catherine spoke first about Friends events in 2024.

The Friends ran nine events this year, with over 900 bookings and 773 people attending. Crafting Crime clearly fascinates people, and there are some keen nature journallers out there.

A personal highlight was Celia Craig's lecture on her 2024 Creative Art Fellowship (supported by the Friends) on Dr Miriam Hyde, a musical virtuoso, and like Celia, a synesthete, a person who sees colour when playing music. Celia vividly brought to life Miriam's amazing time at the Royal Academy of Music in London in the 1930s. As an added treat, we heard some of Miriam's music, with Celia playing the oboe and leading a trio.

I also learned from Luke Hickey, Assistant Director-General, Engagement at the Library, that we, the Friends, have donated over \$300,000 to the Library, making us Platinum Patrons.

These successful events owe much to three people in particular, Nancy Clarke, who chairs the events sub-committee, Lauren who does so much of the day to day organising and keeping everything on track, and like Nancy, is very good at coming up with ideas; and Belinda, another creative person who can make simple self-catered morning tea look so inviting.

I would also like to thank the Library's events and exhibition team, who have supported our events in many ways, such as researching items in the collection, or sharing their passion about an exhibition.

Michalina spoke about the Friends membership and communications activities through the year.

2024 has been a very busy year for the Friends and has been a year of consolidation. The Committee has been pleased to see support for the Friends and membership returning to pre pandemic levels.

Our Membership and Communications sub-committee have done much to spark interest in the Friends including through enhanced presence at Library events for example at the Canberra Writers Festival. The Committee has taken new approaches to publicising events and activities – through articles, promotional bookmarks, forming partnerships and alliances with other groups such as the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and local libraries. Membership brochures and bookmarks have been widely distributed to libraries, cafes, bookshops and theatres and events have been publicised on community and local ABC radio. The Committee has worked to enhance member benefits such as discounts including to CSO and Snow Concert Hall concerts and to Canberra Writers Festival events at the Library.

The Committee has been creative and energetic in promoting the Friends and enhancing membership benefits.

I would also like to express our thanks to Bookplate and the Bookshop for their generous 20% discount they offer Friends at present. The Bookshop will be offering Friends a 25% discount on 5 December at their pre-Christmas shopping event.

Please take advantage of these great opportunities and of course encourage your friends to join to also access the generous benefits of being a Friend.

I would like to acknowledge the devotion and hard work of the Memberships and Communications sub-committee led by Arnis Stonis and Larissa Karpish.

As Co-Chairs Catherine and I have been privileged to work with a group of dedicated, enthusiastic and talented Committee members who give willingly of their time with one common aim of promoting this wonderful institution. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Amanda Lynch who is retiring from the Committee. Again, our thanks go to the Library staff who work closely with the Committee and the many who work behind the scenes and do much to make our deliberations and work easy.

A very big thank you to Belinda Jessup for her excellent work in providing administrative and logistical support to Friends members and on events. And to Lauren - the two of you make a formidable team. I would like to thank Lauren Conron who works with such enthusiasm and always with the best interests of the Friends and Library in mind. We know how lucky we are to have you working with us.

Finally, I would like to thank Catherine Anderson. When we agreed to share the role of Chair we hoped it would work for the Friends and I have to say it has been a delight to work with Catherine to advance the Friends. Thank you for your great support and inspiration during the year.

5. Financial Report

The audited financial statements for 2023-24 were circulated with the meeting papers. Treasurer Jo Schumann 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 \$163,809 compared to \$145,465 in the previous year. We also hold \$50,000 in a term deposit and the remainder in the day-to-day operating account from which our earnings have doubled since last financial year.

Jo noted that memberships have increased but the dollar value is not reflected in the 2023-24 financial year because a large number of new members elected for a two-year membership. In accounting terms, the relevant dollars are therefore not acknowledged as income until 2024-25.

Functions this year were profitable, an exciting development compared to the loss incurred in this space in 2023-24.

The massive reduction in postage costs has contributed significantly to this financial year's profit. This reduction reflects the decision to go online for newsletter. The increase in sundry expenses is a reflection of increased software costs.

Jo congratulated the committee and NLA staff for making the hard decisions that have led to this year's profit. Jo recommended that the financial statements for the Friends in 2024 be approved.

Moved: Nancy Clarke
Seconded: Larissa Karpish

6. Presentation of the Friends Medal

This year marks the 18th 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.

Michalina announced Margaret Nichols as this year's recipient. Margaret has been involved with the Library since coming to Canberra in 1967. Over time her contribution to and achievements on behalf of the Library and Friends has been truly impressive.

- As a volunteer tour guide and contributor to development of tour guide reference materials,
- A front desk coordinator,
- Contributor of articles to our much-praised Newsletter,
- Worked with staff to test the Library's new website,
- Has inspired and was responsible for many Friends events, including the very popular author talks, White Gloves, Poetry Lounge, Off the Walls and On Stage and many more,
- as Friends Committee Member and as Deputy Chair and then Chair from 2021-2023, taking the leadership role during the difficult pandemic and post-pandemic years and inspiring the Committee through her passion and hard work.

Margaret has shown true leadership in her various roles and has shown a passion and true love for the National Library through her engagement and tireless advocacy.

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

7. Other Business

No other business was raised.

8. Election of the Friends Committee for 2025

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, Margaret Nichols and Josephine Schumann. The Committee was unanimously elected.

Catherine noted that members may be co-opted to the Committee in accordance with the Rules of Association.

9. Guest Speaker – Dr Sarah Ryan AM

Michalina introduced Sarah to speak about the WISENET journal digitisation project which the Friends are financially supporting in 2025.

Michalina congratulated the successful nominees for the 2025 Committee and closed the meeting, with no further business to discuss.

Meeting closed at 6.25pm

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