



Australian
Historical
Association

Annual General Meeting
5.00–6.30pm
Thursday 7 July 2016
Minerva Space
Federation University Australia, Ballarat

Minutes

Present

Bryce Abraham, Karen Agutter, Katherine Allan, Anne Beggs-Sunter, Margaret Birtley, Frank Bongiorno, Jo Bunce, David Carment, Martin Crotty, Robyn Curtis, Karen Downing, James Dunk, Gretel Evans, Karen Fox, Matthew Haultain-Gall, Carolyn Holbrook, Alison Holland, Katie Holmes, Kate Hunter, Joy Damousi, David Lee, Doris LeRoy, Rohan Lloyd, Bronwyn Lowe, Sarah Midford, Andy May, Daniel May, Annemarie McLaren, Ruth Morgan, Petra Mosmann, Val Noone, Bobbie Oliver, Melanie Oppenheimer, Bethany Phillips-Peddlesden, Carroll Pursell, Susan Reidy, Rosemary Richards, Tim Rowse, Lynette Russell, Yorick Small, Kay Steel, Alistair Thomson, Christina Twomey, Rosalie Triolo, Susan Walker, Imogen Wegman, Brian Wills-Johnson, Tiger Zhifu Li, Bart Ziino

1. Apologies

Helen M. Davies, Barbara Dawson, Fiona Paisley, Madonna Grehan, Dianne Hall, Marilyn Lake.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Corrections to the previous minutes were noted: Kay Steel noted that the awards should have been listed biennial awards (not biannual); also Jolanta Nowak spoke, but was not listed in attendees

There were no other amendments to last year's AGM minutes.

MOTION: Carroll Purcell moved the minutes be carried as corrected

Seconded as corrected: Robyn Curtis.

Angela noted one other small issue which was that this year's AGM agenda shows last year's date instead of this year (2016).

3. Executive reports

3.1 President's report (Angela Woollacott)

Angela began by warmly thanking Kier Reeves, Jolanta Nowak and the conference organising committee as well as Federation University. She noted how beautiful the venues were and how much work had been put into coordinating the conference.

In memorium - Angela noted that we had lost several distinguished members: Geoffrey Bolton, John Hirst, John Legge, Patrick Wolfe and Heather Radi. All made significant contributions and we honour them.

Angela also noted how hardworking the Executive Committee had been in the previous year. She congratulated each member and expressed thanks to all.

Correspondence – there was a full list of correspondence in the tabled meeting documents. It broadly included letters to governments, to newspapers and magazines and to universities. She noted that the letters directed to the latter actually made a difference on matters in relation to cost cutting measures and other issues which were affecting postgraduates in particular.

History Australia

Angela referred to the recent significant transition in editorial teams and expressed gratitude and appreciation of the previous editors as well as the book and exhibition review editors. She also thanked ANU for the support it provided for this incredibly hard working team.

She also mentioned the new editorial team, based at Flinders University and how delighted we were to have them on board. She said that they were well and truly at work and she wished them success for their editorial term

In November last year we signed a contract with Taylor and Francis for the continued publication of the journal. She noted that volume 13, number 1 had already come out in May this year and number 2 is coming out very soon.

Angela took the time to speak to this move further. She said that HA was a highly regarded journal by the members but also provided a major service. Moving the journal to T&F was the biggest investment we had made of recent times and it was a decision taken after long deliberation and robust discussion. It comes with major benefits – worldwide distribution in every university library in Australia and New Zealand and 20,000 universities worldwide. Also T&F have a wide marketing platform. It is also better value for members as we now have four issues instead of three, we have longer articles as well as more of them and more reviews. Furthermore, the contract includes \$5000 a year for editorial assistance and this helps to attract editors, as well as support from their universities.

It also means a much more streamlined workflow and involves less time from the Executive Officer.

Angela also pointed out that we had no choice but to move the journal. Monash University Press had provided excellent service in this area, but HA was the last journal they were publishing and they were no longer supporting journal publishing. We researched the alternative options, after which we negotiated with T&F and obtained the best deal we could.

However, it does mean the costs have increased; the annual costs for the journal are at least double what they were.

On behalf of the association Angela thanked Nathan Hollier and his team at Monash University Publishing for their years of publishing the journal.

Upcoming Conferences

- 2017 – University of Newcastle
- 2018 – ANU, Canberra
- 2019 – University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

Prizes and Awards – Angela noted that we had converted the Allan Martin Prize to an annual award for ECR historians worth \$4000 for research support and travel funding. The money is held at the ANU. The terms of prize on establishment were that it would become annual when financially viable and we've now been able to fulfill this intention. This is a significant boost to the research support we are able to offer.

3.2 Vice-president's report (Lynette Russell)

The Vice-President reported on two key issues. First, that journal rankings will be completed by the end of this year and that the group looking into these, Robert Cribb, Joy Damousi, Alistair Thompson and Lynette Russell, will make recommendations on the matter.

Second, she reported that she has been involved in the national research infrastructure roadmap, but was unable to say much about it as no information can be released until the report is issued. Once this has occurred, she will open it up to proper consultation and negotiation. She hopes that members of the AHA look at the recommendations – one of the key ones is that Trove be properly supported.

The report will become available as soon as the federal election is decided and there is a minister.

3.3 Secretary's report (Alison Holland)

No report.

3.4 Treasurer's report (Paul Sendziuk)

Reported on the financial position of the AHA at the moment. We are in a sound position but we have made a major investment in the last financial year which has involved considerable expenditure.

Paul uploaded his report of funds:

- Business transaction account = \$42,249
- Business Online Saver (includes \$5,000 of Jill Roe fund) = \$33,952
- Total net position = \$76,201.

Term deposits for awards and prizes as of 28 June 2016:

- Hancock = \$31,364
- Kay Daniels = \$27,389
- USB Property Security Fund = \$24,523

Allan Martin Award funds are held with ANU.

Paul reported that we have had the financial accounts audited (Aitken O'Grady Chartered Accountants). He noted that our financial year is 30 June 2015 – 31 May 2016.

He noted that in the last financial year we had lost \$12,685 more than we earned.

History Australia cost (2015/2016):

- T&F publishing (first five months of 2016) = \$18,925
- Monash Uni Publishing (2015) + 2015 postage = \$17,914 + \$2,422
- We also had a late invoice for postage for 2014 and early 2015 = \$2,703

Total cost for producing the journal was nearly \$42,000 for 2015/16 compared to just under \$18,000 in the previous financial year. Because we negotiated with T&F, we have a much better deal than the one originally offered.

We pay T&F \$45 per member. We will get some of that cost back in the form of royalties. We have conservatively set that amount at between \$3,000 and \$5,000. Under our five-year contract the royalties are set at 10 per cent of sales, reprints and individual subscriptions.

Last year, the journal cost \$18,000 to produce and about \$2,500 for postage, thus \$20,500 but it also earned income from copyright payments and institutional sales. This means the move to T&F, while advantageous for many reasons, has also been costly.

Frank Bongiorno noted that it is a membership journal and that this raises important issues. He said there were a number of substantial human subsidies that were not always taken into account. He noted that ANU had paid about \$18,000 to support the editorial team and that we can't count on universities being able or willing to do this in the future. It is important to remember this is money coming into the journal that doesn't appear in the statistics.

Paul noted that in the past the Executive Officer was also worked on the journal, which won't be the case with T&F so there are also savings that don't show up in the figures.

He said that, excluding the extra costs related to the journal, we would have returned a modest profit this financial year, because of more members joining and 2,959 more journal subscriptions than 2014/15. We also received a \$12,000 reimbursement for the AHA's Allan Martin award and a surplus from 2015 Sydney conference. In addition, items of expenditure (other than the journal) either decreased in cost or increased less than CPI, compared to 2014/15. We emphasised that we are a thrifty organisation and thanked Karen Downing as Executive Officer who looks to minimise costs wherever she can.

The forecast for the coming financial year is:

- No reimbursements from ANU
- Substantially higher cost of publishing HA
- \$6,150 to be paid in prizes in 2016/2017
- Diminished earnings from interest or bank accounts

3.5 Prizes and awards report (Tim Rowse)

Tim thanked all of our colleagues around the country who judged this year's suite of prizes.

He noted that the Allan Martin Award, to assist ECRs publish a book, was now an annual rather than biennial award.

He also noted that in previous years the Copyright Agency bursary (for mentoring HDR students) had been administered by editors of HA. This was because, under old rules, HA had the first option to publish the articles produced by the successful recipient. Because of this, the administering task came under the Prizes and Awards portfolio. It is now the case that the successful recipient can publish wherever they like. Because of this, he recommended the administrative responsibility for the Copyright Agency bursary should become a separate portfolio on the Executive Committee.

Tim said that Angela has led the executive very well and it had been a pleasure to work with her.

Angela thanked Tim for his hard work and she moved a vote of thanks to all the judges (applause).

There was a question from the floor about the possibility of the AHA supporting more prizes. Angela responded that this was something we could consider in the future, with an AHA book prize and travel funding both being possibilities.

3.6 Membership report (Joy Damousi, Michael Ondaatje)

Karen Downing, as executive officer, spoke to this report. She tabled the numbers and noted that they are healthy. We had increased the annual figure from 750 to around 920 and this figure is holding.

Joy formally thanked Karen for the work she has put in to increase the numbers.

3.6 *History Australia* Editors' report (Melanie Oppenheimer)

Melanie spoke to her report.

She commented on the support provided for editorial assistance from T&F and that her university was also contributing money. This augurs well for future editors.

She personally thanked Karen Downing. The transition to T&F has had its teething problems and it would have been more difficult without her assistance. She also thanked Karen Agutter.

She noted that they had taken the opportunity to renew the editorial board and thanked retiring members: Ann Curthoys, Graeme Davison, Desley Deacon and Marian Quartly.

3.7 Postgraduate student representatives' report (Robyn Curtis, Bethany Phillips-Peddlesden, Petra Mosmann)

Bethany commented that it had been a pleasure working with her colleagues, Robyn and Petra, and thanked them and the conference organisers for their work around creating events for the postgraduate community at the conference.

She noted that they had been called on to act as advocates for postgraduate students, some of whom were suffering because of changes to faculties and departments in various institutions that have had a negative impact on their candidatures. She said that they had been able to represent

their concerns to the Executive Committee and that the President had made representations in various places in support.

She thanked Angela and the Executive for all their support. It is the final term for all three representatives. She noted that their membership on the committee had been fantastic exposure and they had met wonderful people. She wished the incoming team all the best for their term.

3.8 Early career researcher representatives' report (Cath Bishop, Ruth Morgan)

Ruth said that she and Cath had had a wonderful time on the committee. She said they had connected well with conference organisers and with the postgraduate reps on the committee. Cath had campaigned very hard to have casual academic employees recognised in membership fees.

They thanked Karen Downing, particularly for her work with social media to reach out to the ECR community. They also thanked Angela and wished the new reps all the best.

3.9 HTAA representative's report (Rosalie Triolo)

Rosalie said she didn't have a lot to add. She values and thanks the AHA for the co-opted position on the executive. She recounted all the ways in which the co-operative relationship works for both history teachers and AHA members.

She said there was nothing particularly new or pressing to report.

She thanked Angela and Karen for their positive relationship and for developing strong and effective links with the HTAA.

Angela thanked her in return and reiterated how we valued her on the Executive Committee and within the AHA generally.

3.10 Executive Officer's report (Karen Downing)

Karen spoke to her report. She mentioned the following:

- Increased memberships
- Production of printed flyers for lapsed members
- Work on the AHA website
- Social media statistics: Facebook @ 27/6/2016 = 760; Twitter @ 27/6/2016 = 1324
- Heads of History forum – we facilitate a relationship between the executive committee and the Heads of History. We continue to work out ways of having a closer relationship between the group and members of the executive.

Karen said a huge thank you to the president and the other members of executive and all the members. She said it had been a pleasure working with the executive and that the members were invaluable.

Angela thanked everyone on the committee and David Carment, who represents us on the National Archives of Australia working party.

In particular she expressed her deep and heartfelt thanks to Karen for her highly organised, efficient, intelligent and imaginative work for the AHA. She said it had been fantastic to work with her and it is a relationship she will very much miss.

She also thanked the School of History at ANU.

She then introduced Dr Ann Standish as the new Executive Officer.

4. AHA conferences

4.1 AHA Conference 2017: University of Newcastle (Nancy Cushing for Philip Dwyer)

Nancy said that the her University was looking forward to hosting the next AHA conference on 3 -7 July. The theme is 'Entangled Histories'. The committee had booked the rooms at the City Hall in the centre of the city, which was the same venue used when they hosted the AHA in 2004. They had also booked a couple of large venues for the plenaries. There are many cafes and restaurants nearby. Keynotes are all in place and they will be recognising NAIDOC week. There will be a Hunter Valley wine tour. She mentioned that it was easy to reach by air travel. There was a plan to have a pre-conference session on digital histories and this might become a strand through the conference.

4.2 AHA Conference 2018: Australian National University

4.3 AHA Conference 2019: University of Southern Queensland

5. Special resolution to raise membership fees

Angela moved that in accordance with section 4.2 of the AHA constitution the following changes to membership costs are being proposed (in the papers circulated):

- Individual from \$ 100 to \$150
- Student from \$55 to \$85
- Concession/Unwaged from \$55 to \$100
- Primary/Secondary teachers from \$75 to \$120
- Affiliated individual from \$110 to \$170
- Affiliated organisation from \$500 to \$750

Angela pointed out that we had very modest price rises in 2010 and our prices have not kept pace. She believed we had been undercharging membership for some time. Less than half our members pay full membership rates and that number is declining. The proposed increase brings us in line with comparable membership fees in other associations.

The benefits are significant and include HA journal, AHA conference, representation for the discipline, prizes and the weekly online newsletter as well as the members-only content of website. We remain, even with these price rises, significant value for money.

She acknowledged that it is a sizeable jump but that they are necessary to the future viability of the organisation.

Questions and comments from the floor included:

- André Brett said he was generally supportive of the rises. However, he wasn't convinced that the concession rate should be raised more than the student rate. Postgraduates can draw on more institutional support to cover costs than casuals/unwaged and others. The two should have been raised to same amount.
- Terry Kass noted that membership for the Professional Historians Association was \$150 a year. He fully supported the rise.
- Carroll Pursell mentioned that he was in the retired category. However, he had done the sums and worked out that the increase will cost him another \$45 a year. This means that he is being charged one flat-white coffee a month. He was prepared to wear that.
- Katie Holmes said she thought the increase was reasonable but noted that the waged can claim as a tax deduction. She suggested that the increase for waged should be higher than that for the unwaged.
- Frank Bongiorno noted that he preferred the American Historical Association model which is based on levels of income in the waged category. He thinks this is a good model worth emulating. He suggested that the executive look at this model. He thought it might be justified on equity grounds. Lynette Russell agreed. Angela agreed that this model had merit but would need to be a future consideration.

More discussion ensued over the issue of the unwaged and student categories of pricing.

Petra Mosmann said she was generally supportive of the price rise but uncomfortable with unwaged being charged more than students. She proposed a new category based on low income healthcare card.

Tim Rowse asked whether she was proposing a new category or asking us to operationalise the term 'concession' in a certain way.

Martin Crotty thought the category should be for student/low income healthcare card.

MOTION: Angela moved on the amendment that unwaged be taken out from the concession category and a new category of 'low income healthcare card' be inserted with the same membership fees as students.

The amendment was carried.

MOTION: Angela now turned to the full proposal for the membership fee increase with the amendment.

The motion was passed.

6. AHA Executive 2016–2018: Election of officers and ordinary members

The following officers were elected unopposed:

Lynette Russell – President

Joy Damousi – Vice-President

Alison Holland – Secretary

Paul Sendziuk – Treasurer

Michelle Burkitt, Annemarie McLaren, Daniel May – Postgraduate Student Representatives

Carolyn Holbrook, Margaret Hutchison – Early Career Researcher Representatives

Members were asked to record their vote for ordinary members by marking five candidates on the ballot. These were counted by Ann Standish and David Carment with Alison Holland as scrutineer.

The following ordinary members were elected:

Martin Crotty

Karen Downing

Ruth Morgan

Tim Rowse

Christina Twomey

Ann Standish was officially appointed as Executive Officer.

7. Other business

Lynette formally acknowledged Angela's fantastic leadership of the AHA over the past two years.

All agreed and applauded.