



**MINUTES**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023**

Tuesday, 2 May 2023, 5:00 – 6:30 PM

via Zoom Meeting

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Dr. Stephen Gapps, President of the HCNSW, welcomed all in attendance, and acknowledged the traditional owners of the lands that all parties were joining from, extending respect to Country and Elders.

**In attendance HCNSW General Council:** Stephen Gapps (President, Chair, SG), Leah Lui-Chivizhe (LLC), Isobelle Barrett Meyering (Treasurer, IBM), Matthew Allen (MA), Richard Neville (RN).

**In attendance HCNSW Staff:** Catherine Shirley (CS), Amanda Wells (AW, Minutes)

**In attendance HCNSW Members:** Cathy Dunn (CD), Bob Clarke (BC), Christine Yeats (CY), Frances Cairns (FC), Charmaine Robson (CR), David Carment (DC), Effie Karageorgos (EK), Jess Adams Stein (JAS), Jeff Hopkins-Weise (JHW), Louise Trott (LT), Nancy Cushing (NC), Peter Hobbins (PH), Roland Leikauf (RL), Ruth Graham (RG).

**Apologies:** Kiera Lindsey, Jan Lanicek, Laila Ellmoos, Julie McIntyre (JMCI).

**2. Minutes from the previous Annual General Meeting held on 3 May 2022**

Questions and comments were invited, none received. DC moved that the minutes of the 2022 AGM be accepted, and MA seconded the motion.

**3. President's Report**

SG reported that the past year had been not as trying as the year before, and had been quite successful. One highlight of the year was the AHL at Orange, which was very

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successful. Another highlight has been the incredible hard work of HCNSW staff and the Executive Council in securing the future of the History Council: in applying for funding, and for extending the HCNSW's audience reach, particularly through social media.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

IBM reported that 2022 had been a positive year, with a profit of \$4,649 instead of a small loss as had been projected. We made some major investments this year, including upgrading our accounting software and membership database system. We have already seen positive results from these investments. The 2022 auditor's report summary of figures has been included in the 2022 Annual Report, and if anyone is interested to see the full auditor's report, please contact CS. In sum, 2022 was a financially straightforward year. IBM noted that she will be stepping down as treasurer in 2023, and wanted to note thanks to CS, all the staff, and to members of the EC in particular for their help over her two terms. SG thanked IBM for her hard work as Treasurer.

MA moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted, and NC seconded the motion. Treasurer's report accepted.

#### **5. Nomination of an auditor for the 2023 financial year**

IBM suggested that the new auditor from 2022 be appointed again for 2023, as they were very thorough and effective in this past year. IBM moved that Economos be nominated, MA seconded the motion. Motion accepted.

#### **6. Special Resolution: Constitutional change due to new Associations Incorporated Regulation 2022**

SG introduced the special resolution to incorporate changes made to the HCNSW constitution, which reflect recommended changes made by new associations regulations, and updated language around First Nations members. SG noted thanks to JMc for going through the constitution and updated regulations to work out what required changing for this resolution.

CY moved that the resolution be put to a vote, RN seconded this motion. SG asked that members raise hands or type in the zoom chat if they object to the resolution. No objections were received. SG confirmed that the resolution is thereby unanimously supported.

#### **7. Ballot for the election of the General Council**

SG informed the meeting that exactly ten nominations had been received for the ten General Council positions, and therefore no voting will be necessary.

Those elected to the General Council for a two year term (2023-5) were: Dr Stephen Gapps, Dr Jesse Adams Stein, A/Prof Julie McIntyre, Dr Effie Karageorgos, Dr Isobelle Barrett Meyering, Dr Jan Láníček, Laila Ellmoos, Richard Neville, Dr Leah Lui-Chivizhe, and Jeff Hopkins-Weise.

SG congratulated all of the new General Council members, and thanked the outgoing members for their work. SG confirmed that the names of the new council will be uploaded to the HCNSW website shortly. The EC will be elected from the GC members at the next GC meeting to be held in four weeks.

#### **8. Annual Report**

SG introduced the Annual Report which had been uploaded to the HCNSW website the Friday prior to the meeting, commenting that the review is comprehensive and demonstrates all the work done over the past year.

CS scrolled through the Annual Report which was shared on the screen for all members to see. CS highlighted that the statistics included in this year's report show that there has been movement back from virtual events to in-person events for History Week. Data in the report also shows the very good attendance at events held by the HCNSW, with a particularly good turnout at the Annual History Lecture at Orange.



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Communications has been a key focus of the HCNSW, with promotion and coverage of members' events being a valuable benefit of membership. The Communications Officer's sole focus is coordinating social media and newsletter communications to bring value to the HCNSW and its members.

CS also highlighted the valuable partnerships that the HCNSW has with its corporate members, particularly highlighting the State Library of NSW and Richard Neville, who have supported the Council for events. The Annual Report also has summaries and photos of events held through the year, including the Newcastle Writers' Festival, the Sydney Writers' Festival, and the Awards and Prizes night.

LLC moved that the Annual Report be accepted, and BC seconded the motion. Annual Report for 2022 accepted.

## **9. Looking forward to 2023**

SG reported that the 2023 History Week theme has been recently announced: 'Voices from the Past', and the Annual History Lecture will be given by Thomas Mayo, a significant campaigner for The Voice Referendum. The venue will be in Western Sydney, exactly which venue to be confirmed.

The GC and HCNSW staff are keen to keep developing First Nations programs, and the new events subcommittee has begun work on planning implementing programs for the rest of the year. CS thanked past members of the events subcommittee for their hard work. CS also noted that there has been less funding for events this year due to the specifics of the grant we received, but that there is money in the budget for core events, including First Nations programs, and Speaker Connect. LLC invited members to get in touch with the Programs Officer if they have event ideas they would like to offer. CS highlighted that we are interested in developing partnerships with other organisations, and she invited members with ideas of who to reach out to for partnerships and events to contact the Programs



Officer. NC, on behalf of the grants subcommittee also asked that any members with ideas of where to apply for grants and funding should also contact the Programs Officer.

#### **10. COVID-19 - Effects and Responses**

SG noted that the effects of COVID-19 had largely been covered in the Annual Report: we have seen a return to in person events, with online and hybrid events less dominant in the schedule. The HCNSW is fortunate not to have major ongoing impacts from COVID-19.

#### **11. Strategic Planning and directions for the HCNSW**

SG noted that the strategy planning that has been done by the outgoing General Council and Executive Council has formed most of what has been covered in the meeting so far. He noted that the HCNSW has faced challenges including finding avenues for sustainable funding, and staff turnover over the past year, but that the current team is strong. SG also noted that a key emphasis for the Council is to ensure that our members continue to get value for their membership.

CS added that it has been discussed recently with the General Council and the Grants Subcommittee that having a couple of ideas and concepts 'up our sleeves' would be beneficial so that we could act quickly on funding opportunities. We can be exploring ways to reach out to our members, and to industry, to find out how we can promote and engage with History in the community. A previous idea was to enact a community survey about the landscape of History in the community. This pre-emptive strategy is something that the new GC and EC will have on their agenda.

SG added that one of the elements of the HCNSW's aims has been advocacy for History. A good example of this was the HCNSW's submission in the past 12 months to the Attorney-General's Department about the Functional & Efficiency Review of the National Archives of Australia (Tune Review). But we would like to explore other ways that the HCNSW can be active in advocacy. Previously the general running of the council has taken

priority and advocacy activities had fallen off the agenda, but we are looking for ways to rectify that.

## **12. Members' response - an opportunity for members to speak at the AGM**

CR asked about a survey that had been circulated some time ago about advocating for Heritage. SG responded that yes, that had been done, but the remit for that had not yet been determined – it is something that he believed should move forward. CR registered her interest in being involved in moving the Heritage project forward as well. SG noted that advocacy in this area needs to be well defined, as it can be a ‘rabbit hole’, and RN agreed that criteria need to be set to avoid overwhelming. We don’t want to risk allocating all paid staff hours to one project. PH added that the Heritage Act was under review, but put on hold. He suggested that the revised Heritage Act may offer an opportunity for the HCNSW to act when it is unveiled.

PH added his thanks to the outgoing and ingoing committees, noting the effort that goes into running organisations like the HCNSW. The HCNSW has a high profile, and that ought to be applauded.

JAS asked if the UTS Public History information was successfully being shared across to the HCNSW. CS confirmed that it is, and NC noted how good the Public History newsletter has been, agreeing that partnerships with History organisations like this are valuable for all parties.

NC asked if there was any movement recently with the History Councils of Australia, and collaborations with the other state History Councils. SG replied that there had not been movement in that area recently – the arrangement has been informal, and inactive as of late. NC suggested that the recent advocacy around Trove serves as a good example of how a national body would be valuable – also in providing moral support for the other councils. SG suggested that we look to forming a subcommittee to work on gaining momentum on the HCA again. NC agreed.



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RN asked if we have had a sense of how the new government views History? NC noted that the AHA had approached the new federal government, with a favourable response. RN noted that there was already talk of 'budget repair' within the new NSW government. SG responded that an approach to the new state government had been discussed, but it had been decided to let the dust settle first. PH added that the National Cultural Policy has some very important sections relevant to us, including keeping First Nations first, and a place for every story and a story for every place. However, there is no 'History' or 'Heritage' in this policy – it focuses on literature and entertainment. RN agreed that the cultural policy, and ones before it, doesn't refer to History, and this could be an area where the HCNSW could advocate to move History back into the cultural sector. SG agreed.

### **13. Any other business**

With no other business raised, SG suggested that the meeting close at 6pm. SG thanks the staff again for their hard work over the past year. LLC added another thanks to the outgoing GC members, and looked forward to getting things done with the new team. CS added that she would shortly send out appointments to everyone for the first GC meeting, where the EC will be elected.

*Meeting closed at 6.02pm*