



Minutes of the 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Friday 31 March 2023, in the Club Sapphire Meeting Room (downstairs)

Meeting Commenced at 11.35 am

Present: Judy Brand, Paul Strutynski, Merryn Dowling, Roger Harris, Garry Clear, Sue O'Loughlin, Heather Bond, Christine Kaine, Malcolm Privett, Marg Nicoll, Patricia Dive, Fleur Dwyer, Carolyn Smith

Apologies: Pat O'Hanlon, Alister Lee, Helen Stevenson, Elizabeth Stacey, Margaret Brown, Bev Smith, Sandy Coates, Bridget O'Hanlon, Rod Nicoll, Rosie Bunton, Therese Hamer, Michele Patten, Sue Fowler

President Paul Strutynski welcomed all present and invited attendees to participate, with comments, questions and suggestions.

Confirmation of previous minutes: The minutes of the AGM held on 22 March 2022 were endorsed as a true record. **Moved:** Malcolm Privett, **Seconded:** Sue O'Loughlin

Annual Financial Report:

Judy Brand spoke to the Audited Financial report, previously distributed. She noted it was her first report as treasurer and as a committee member, and thanked Chris Bembrick and Team Office for their support.

Judy noted that most revenue comes from membership, which leads to a tight budget as membership has not increased as dramatically as was hoped post Covid. Most of our costs are not discretionary, and some, including public liability, have escalated sharply. We have also resumed paying full rent for the Tura Beach Centre.

There is a loss of \$1,743.09 but an expense of \$3,442.52 was depreciation, bank account is OK.

Membership is the main issue with the budget being based on having 400 members, while

currently there are 361.

The accounts were audited this year although it is not a requirement. Audit cost is \$550 and it was questioned whether this was necessary every year. Chris Bembrick wanted an audit as assurance that all was in order when handing the Treasurer role to Judy, and this year's audit was an assurance all is in order after her first year in the role.

Motion: That the books be audited every second year. **Moved:** Carolyn Smith, **Seconded** Marg Nicoll. Passed.

We are also now paying full rent, despite not having access to the front door and office. The Committee's decision was to pay full rent after the accident, valuing the relationship with the landlord after her generosity during Covid, and given the rent has not increased. We expect a larger deficit next year as we will be paying full rent for the full year.

Due to low interest rates there is not a lot of interest income, especially from the current account. Judy will follow up options which might increase the interest return.

Carolyn Smith moved a vote of thanks to Chris Bembrick for his ongoing support.

President's Report

Paul Strutynski spoke to the President's report, a full copy of which is appended.

He highlighted achievements, including no increase in fees, closer ties with U3A Bermagui and the decision to abandon attendance records.

He highlighted the challenges ahead – primarily recovery from Covid, and the need to bolster numbers with flow on financial benefits. He noted this falls heavily on the Program Team to present a program which is attractive to new and returning members.

Finally Paul thanked the many people who contribute to the smooth running of the organization – the Program, Newsletter, Office and Management teams, the Course co-ordinators and presenters, Terry Prowse for maintaining the website, and members present at the meeting for their participation.

Fleur Dwyer moved that the report be accepted

Discussion:

Attracting Membership/Participants:

- Bermagui has an enrolment day every term with presenters in attendance which might generate interest, even if held annually.
- It has not been held since Covid,
- they have fewer courses so it is easier to manage.
- these used to be held at both Bega and Merimbula but as Team Office is now available weekly they were discontinued
- the characteristics of the populations in Bega, Merimbula and Bermagui are very different.

- there are a lot of people who have never heard of U3A and how to connect with the
- PR Job very difficult - always looking for opportunities to promote
- local media has not been helpful to date –not interested in providing free publicity for community organizations.
- relationships with people important – the only way to get stories published
- Paul is developing a PR strategy
- community radio could be an option.
- a lot of members have not returned after Covid - need to look at what is being offered, what they were doing and where they have gone.
- a high number of members are not enrolled in any courses
- difficulty in finding leaders for courses people want to attend
- look at waiting lists to see what people want
- it may be possible to pay non-members to run courses
- people new to the area go to the visitor centres or council – ensure brochures are available, council information is up to date
- 80% of members are women – is this significant
- post-Covid many people still reluctant to gather
- general volunteer base affected post Covid as people have postponed retirement or are working part time

Paypal:

- It was requested that the management team investigate PAYPAL and possible alternatives as many people do not want to use PAYPAL and find the presentation on the website confusing.

Actions:

- The management team will investigate Bermagui's processes for possible lessons.
- The management team will look at the data base for any information about membership renewals, and possible course interests
- The management team will look at ways of making payment processes clearer and/or simpler

Appointment of an auditor

No audit to be performed until 2025.

Election of Officers and members for the U3A SC Management Committee for 2023

In accordance with the constitution, the Committee resolved at its meeting on 9 March 2023 that the size of the Committee would be 8 members, comprising President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and 4 general committee members.

8 nominations were received for the Management Team, and the following Committee was declared elected

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Second
President	Paul Strutynski	Carolyn Smith	Garry Clear
Vice President	Garry Clear	Carolyn Smith	Sue O'Loughlin
Treasurer	Judy Brand	Sue O'Loughlin	Garry Clear
Secretary, Public Officer	Merryn Dowling	Judy Brand	Sue O'Loughlin
General Committee	Sue O'Loughlin	Judy Brand	Garry Clear
General Committee	Carolyn Smith	Garry Clear	Sue O'Loughlin
General Committee	Roger Harris	Paul Strutynski	Sue O'Loughlin
General Committee	Sue Fowler	Merryn Dowling	Sue O'Loughlin

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.34 pm.

President's Report

Thank you for turning up. AGMs are not known as fun events and that's understandable because they normally consist of people standing at the front droning on. I will be no exception.

There's a number of things I want to cover on behalf of the Management Team. One is to mention some of the things I think we have achieved this year. The second is to mention one or two of the challenges facing us over the rest of the year. And third is to say thank you to the many people that deserve recognition and thanks at events such as this.

First, our achievements, modest as they are.

On the financial front, one achievement has been to keep an annual fee increase at bay. We conducted a rough survey of around 25 U3As up and down the east coast and found our fee was near the bottom, with the average nearly double ours. Even so, we decided to keep it that way—for now at least.

It means running a deficit, but we have money in the bank to cover such things for quite a while, as well as unforeseen contingencies.

Speaking of the deficit, I should mention that it is lower than it would otherwise have been had we been paying full rent over the course of the year, which we haven't thanks to the generosity of our landlord in these COVID times. The hidden deficit is around \$5,000, which is around the same as the deficit we would have had in 2021 had we been paying full rent that year as well.

A second achievement has been to develop closer ties to Bermagui U3A with the hope of broadening the range of courses and one-off presentations we are able to offer members. As a result, we've had a number of Bermagui presenters come down here and present some very interesting one-off courses. We hope to continue and build on this very pleasing development.

A third achievement has been to eliminate the need for course coordinators to keep class attendance records and check attendance at each meeting. This had been deemed necessary for insurance purposes, but we managed to eliminate the need after discussions with the insurer, while, importantly still ensuring members are protected by insurance.

But we still have challenges ahead. The main one is recovering from COVID.

Prior to COVID, we had between 500 and 600 members. At the height of COVID our numbers dropped to half that or less. They have recovered somewhat, to 360. But it's not the resurgence we had hoped for.

The issue is that while our numbers may have dropped, our bills have not. In fact they are going up with inflation and so we need to ensure our membership numbers are going up as well to cover our increasing costs.

Our main strategy to address this issue is for our hard-pressed Program Team to continue to crank out as wide a range of courses and one offs as possible to help attract new members. If there's something on offer that appeals to you as a potential member, you'll join; if there isn't, you won't. We're also developing a modest PR strategy to help boost membership numbers.

Finally, the thank yous.

I don't plan to name individuals for two reasons. One is because naming some people means you're not naming others, which has obvious risks. The second reason is that all of us who run U3A now operate in teams and should therefore share both the bricks and bouquets.

So first, I want to thank course coordinators and presenters. Without them we would not have U3A. So, as always, our sincerest thanks. Really, truly, we do thank you.

Second, the Program Team. As U3A insiders know, it's the Program Team and not the Management Team that is the backbone of the organisation. But even short-staffed, they always come up trumps (if you'll excuse the expression). So a big, really big, thank you to them.

Third, the Office Team, who do critical but unheralded work every Friday afternoon to help with enrolments and other queries. I suspect our membership would be much lower but for them. Thank you all.

Next, the Newsletter Team which, as you all know each month puts out a most excellent newsletter. It's become the glue that binds us all together. Well done Team.

Then, Terry Prouse who manages our website on her own (and is not part of a team). Terry always quickly updates the site as required and deserves our gratitude—the website also being critical to our operation.

Finally, the Management Team. You want people on a MT who see things from an organisation-wide perspective, who work as a team, and who are not looking to push any personal barrows and the like. You have had that with the current team—in spades—and I would like to thank them for their sound stewardship of this organisation.

And thank you for your time, and your very important attendance today.