

**AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR BIOCHEMISTRY
AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY INC**

Annual General Meeting No. 58 (2014) Minutes

The 58th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Inc. was held from 1740 hours on Wednesday 1st October 2014 in the National Convention Centre, Canberra.

1. Apologies.

An apology from Bruce Kemp was noted.

2. Confirmation of the minutes of Annual General Meeting No. 57.

Acceptance of the minutes of Annual General Meeting No. 57 was proposed by Terry Piva, seconded by Marie Bogoyevitch and accepted as a true account of the meeting.

3. Results of Council Elections.

The President informed the meeting that single nominations had been received for all positions on Council for 2015. The Council membership is as follows for 2015:

President	Peter Gunning
Past President	Frances Shannon
President-Elect	Michael Ryan
Secretary	Paul Attwood
Treasurer	Terrence Piva
Editor	Chu Kong Liew
Secretary for Sust. Members	Sally Jay
FAOBMB Representative	Leann Tilley

Representatives for:

ACT	Yit Heng Chooi (Jennifer Clancy Retired)
NSW	Judith Weidenhofer
Qld	Dominic Chi Hiung Ng (Ross Smith retiring)
SA	Briony Forbes
Tas	Adele Holloway
Vic	Diana Stojanovski
WA	Nicolas Taylor (Bernard Callus retiring)

4. President's Report.

The President presented the report (to be published in the *Australian Biochemist*, December 2014).

ComBio: It is expected that attendance at ComBio2014 will be in the order of 715 and the meeting thanked the organising committee of ComBio2014 for all of their hard work, with special thanks to the Chair, Edna Hardeman, the Deputy Chair, Ulrike Mathesius, the Program Chairs, Jacqui Matthews and Thomas Preiss, the Treasurer Terry Piva and the all members of the organising committee.

The organisation of ComBio2015 is well underway, the Convenor is Marie Bogoyevitch, and the Treasurer is Terry Piva. The convenor for ComBio2016 is Joe Rothnagel.

The President outlined the new agreement with the NZSBMB that has been endorsed by Council, regarding their involvement in ComBio meetings and reciprocal arrangements for members of ASBMB attending NZSBMB meetings. In this agreement, joint meetings with NZSBMB would be held every three years as part of ComBio, with ComBio2015 being the first such meeting. ComBio meetings held jointly with NZSBMB would always be held in an east coast city (Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane). No joint meetings will be held in New Zealand. All future ComBio meetings will be held in the six Capital cities. The President asked the meeting to endorse this agreement. The meeting unanimously supported the agreement.

Membership: It was noted that the membership of the Society is fairly stable around 1050 members and is on track in 2014/2015 to achieve this number again. The award of Gold Membership status to 50+ year members Peter Nixon and Ron Hill was noted. Francis Shannon was nominated by Council to receive Honorary Membership of the Society. The President made a brief statement of the candidate's scientific achievements and service to the Society before calling on the meeting to vote on her election. Francis Shannon's elevation to Honorary Member of the Society was unanimously endorsed by the meeting. The President congratulated her on her election to Honorary Member Status, which was also acclaimed by the meeting.

Conference support: Approximately \$15,000 has been committed to support conferences in 2014 and the conferences that have received support were presented to the meeting. In view of the finances of the Society and the proliferation of small meetings, some of which have potential conflicts with ComBio meetings, the President outlined the change to the way ASBMB would now support external meetings through the State Branches. State Representatives would be able to approve support up to \$500 from state funds.

Budget: The financial position of the Society remains strong as the Treasurer will report BUT the Society's capital base has been eroded by approx \$200,000 in the last 3 years. Council is considering measures to address these annual financial losses:

- Decrease support for external conferences (see above)
- Move funds to gain better interest
- Reduce costs associated with the Australian Biochemist (A slightly thinner paper has started to be used to print the Australian Biochemist and has already resulted in reduced direct costs and postage costs, with no perceptible loss in the quality of the publication.)
- CPI increase in membership fees (the meeting will be asked to accept the proposed membership fee increases)

Communications: The President reported that Chu Kong Liew, Judith Weidenhofer and Sheena McGowan organised the survey of members. Some of the major findings of the survey were as follows:

- Australian Biochemist is popular with all members
- There is no enthusiasm for Facebook, Twitter etc
- There is strong support to improve the web site
- We have to better meet the needs of early career members

Awards: The awards continue to attract high quality nominations, but low overall numbers of nominations. An advertising campaign has been initiated.

Thanks: The President thanked members of ASBMB Executive and Council, Sally and Chris Jay in the National Office and Liana Freidman and the Editorial Committee. Organisers of Special Interest Groups and the many others who have worked hard for the Society were also thanked.

Changes to Council: Leaving – Frances Shannon (Past President), Jennifer Clancy (ACT Representative), Ross Smith (Qld State Representative), Bernard Callus (WA State Representative) the President thanked these members of Council for their many years of service.

New Members – Michael Ryan (President), Yit Heng Chooi (ACT Representative), Nicolas Taylor (WA State Representative), Dominic Chi Hiung Ng (Qld State Representative), Peter Gunning (Past President), the President welcomed the new members.

Acceptance of the President's report was proposed by Jacqui Matthews and seconded by Michael Ryan. The meeting accepted the report.

5. **Treasurer's Report.**

The Treasurer, Terry Piva, presented his report to be published in the *Australian Biochemist*, December 2014. The report highlighted the continuing financial strength of the Society despite losses over the last 3 years. A summary of the report is as follows:

The overall financial position of the Society continues to be strong and the balance sheet indicates we have total assets of \$615,745 and a total equity of \$512,581.

The 2013-2014 financial year showed an operating loss of \$86,646, compared with a loss of \$88,567 in the previous financial year. This is the sixth successive year we have recorded an operating loss.

The operating loss reflects a range of factors. These include:

- Reduced COMBIO income (2013 - \$6,000)
- Overall flat membership numbers, though sustaining membership increased
- Reduced advertising income
- Reduced interest on bank deposits
- Conference support of meetings of \$15,000 in 2014.
- Profit share payments from ComBios in 2010-2012 (paid \$56,786).

The Treasurer thanked Brian Hiley at Priestleys, Ian Price, Sally & Chris Jay, Greg Anderson, Fellow members of the executive.

6. **Membership Fees for 2015-16**

The treasurer outlined the proposal to raise membership fees by the CPI (3%) and to introduce a discount of 20% to those members who opted to take out three year memberships.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report and the new membership fee structure was proposed by Merlin Crossley and seconded by Jacqui Matthews, the proposal was unanimously endorsed by the meeting.

Prior to discussion of items 7 and 8 the Secretary declared the meeting quorate, with 51 members in attendance (quorum = 50 members).

7. Changes to the Constitution.

The President went through the reasons behind the proposed changes to the Constitution that have been endorsed by Council and circulated to members by email prior to the AGM.

Amendment 1: The inclusion of an Education Representative on Council (item 5.1 in the Constitution).

The President asked the meeting if anyone objected to this proposal and there were no objections from the meeting, hence the proposal was accepted by the meeting.

Amendment 2: Removal of all references to the Research Gift Fund from the Constitution as this fund has now been wound up (items 5.8, 5.9, 9.7 and 11.5 of the Constitution).

The President asked the meeting if anyone objected to this proposal and there were no objections from the meeting, hence the proposal was accepted by the meeting.

8. Changes to the By-Laws of the Constitution.

Council has endorsed the following changes to the By-Laws of the Constitution:

1. Update of references to awards to reflect the changes in sponsorship of many of the awards.

The proposal was opened to discussion and Phillip Nagley suggested that rather than having to keep changing references to the awards as sponsors changed that the awards be referred to in a more generic way in the Constitution.

The Secretary thanked Professor Nagley for his suggestion and indicated that this proposal would be discussed in Executive and Council.

Edith Lees thought that reference to the sponsors in the Constitution would help maintain good relations with the Sustaining Members.

The Secretary thanked Dr. Lees for her comment and this too would be considered at Executive and Council.

The Secretary asked the meeting if there were any dissenters from the proposal. No members objected and the proposal was carried.

2. By-Law 4(d) is amended so that the documents of the Society are archived at the National Office of the Society.

Phillip Nagley asked if there would still be an archivist and the Secretary replied that the person in charge of the National Office would act in this capacity.

The Secretary asked the meeting if there were any dissenters from the proposal. No members objected and the proposal was carried.

3. By-Law 6 is amended to reflect the fact that sponsorship of meetings is devolved to the State Branches and Special Interest Groups.

The Secretary asked the meeting if there were any dissenters from the proposal. No members objected and the proposal was carried.

9. **Funding for ASBMB-sponsored symposium speakers at ComBio.9**

The Secretary reported that ASBMB continues to sponsor 6 additional symposium speakers (\$2000 each).


10. **Any Other Business.**

Phillip Nagley raised the issue of the complicated voting scheme described in APPENDIX I of the Constitution for the Society's awards.

The Secretary indicated that Council was in the process of updating and where possible, simplifying the Constitution and APPENDIX I would be examined by Council and any recommendation for change would be brought to an AGM.

Meeting closed 18.29 hours

Minutes Confirmed


..... M RYAN (President)


..... P ATTWOOD (Secretary)