

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2020

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at 5:00pm (AEST) on Monday 24 August 2020.

Due to health and travel restrictions, the AGM was held via Zoom webinar. The physical location was at the ACMHN Head Office, Unit 9/11 Napier Close Deakin ACT 2600.

Apologies were emailed to enquiries@acmhn.org.

1. Welcome

Ellen Fraser covered Zoom etiquette, explaining the Q & A function, chat function, and advised that the meeting was being recorded.

Tom Ryan (Acting President) welcomed participants to the AGM.

2. Attendance and apologies

Shirley Baker; Alison Thorne; Bheena Sewnarain; Pauline Acworth; Ilze Jaunberzins; Margaret Anderson

3. Confirmation of the ACMHN AGM minutes 9 October 2019

Tom Ryan presented the minutes from the previous AGM as a true and accurate representation of that meeting.

A typo in motion two was noted for correction.

Moved: Brenda Happell

Seconded: Denis Casey

4. Business arising from previous minutes

No business arising from previous minutes.

5. President's report

Tom Ryan tabled his report as the Acting President, Vice-President and Chair of the Board of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. (attached)

6. Chief Executive Officer's report

Stephen Jackson tabled his report as the CEO, noting that quorum had been reached for the AGM. (attached)

7. Finance report

Stephen Jackson tabled the finance report. He referred to the finance report from 2019 that Scott Trueman submitted as a background of what the College had to work with this financial year.

Audited financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2020 have been published.

The financial report, auditor's report and financial statements will all be available on request.

8. Engagement of auditor

Stephen Jackson recommended the reengagement of Hardwick's as auditors for the 2020-2021 financial year. He sought the membership's support of that recommendation.

Moved: Daria Peck

Seconded: Michael Blair

9. Incoming President's address

Mike Hazelton spoke with thanks to the outgoing Acting President and Board, as well as to the incoming Board, before giving some detail of his professional background.

10. Other submitted business

Tom Ryan addressed a question from Michael Blair in relation to the minutes of the 2019 AGM. Tom understood that all participants entering the AGM were verified as members, however Tom deferred to Stephen Jackson to confirm this and respond offline to Michael Blair.

The Productivity Commission Report is tabled with the Minister, though not yet in Parliament.

The PHN documents exist in draft, though the College has not viewed the new guidelines.

Michael Blair noted that motion one (a recommendation of a specialist mental health nurse register with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia) from the 2019 AGM recommended a report at this AGM. Tom noted that there has been an exchange of correspondence, and work is ongoing. He recommended a document be prepared to outline the actions that have been taken and those ongoing. Stephen acknowledged it is part of an ongoing conversation with various government bodies.

Attachment 1 – Presidents Report 2020

Presidents report to AGM 2020

I present my report as Vice President, acting President and Chair of the Board of Directors of the ACMHN and outline some of the main events of the year. Globally and nationally I think we may be in danger of running out of adjectives, printable or otherwise, to describe 2020. 2019 was a stressful and difficult year for the board and some aspects of that stress and difficulty took until early 2020 to resolve. The workload and time requirements for the board were enormous, particularly for the President and Vice President even before COVID-19 complicated things for everyone beyond belief. As members know we had progressive resignations from the board which have been discussed during the year but I do want to acknowledge the hard work and leadership of Professors Eimear Muir-Cochrane, Kim Foster, Brenda Happell, Lorna Moxham and Dr Scott Trueman and Mr Martin Smith.

The resignations meant that Mark Powell and I, as remaining board members, had to urgently request the support of our colleagues in maintaining a working board and the ACMHN will forever be indebted to Prof John Hurley, Dr Pat Bradley, Jillian Reid and (via election to the Chair of the Council of Branches) James Houghton who stepped in at short notice and to their considerable surprise to competently govern the college at that difficult time.

In late 2019 the board confirmed a contract as CEO for Stephen Jackson. I shudder to think where we would be now were it not for Stephen's skills as a leader and manager. He has been available, responsive, adaptable and supportive, as have the rest of the college staff who have all exceeded expectations to meet the challenges of coping with a workload initially fielded by considerably more people. The team of staff at the college have stood fast in these trying times and enabled the ongoing function of the college and board in its work of advocating and supporting our members. A special note of thanks to all the team.

The various ACMHN committees, run as always by volunteer members and absolutely essential to the functioning of the organisation, remain strong and active. The Council of Branches transitioned from the active leadership of Prof Lorna Moxham to that of James Houghton and it is my hope that it will increase its role in the life of the college as Branches and SIGs regain their relevance and importance to the active and meaningful involvement of members.

The decision to cancel the ACMHN conference this year was a difficult one. The conference is not only a central feature of the life of the college and member inclusion, but historically a major contributor to revenue. Branches and SIGs have responded by examining and in some cases implementing ways to create events, expertly assisted by our highly skilled Event Manager, Ellen Fraser, who has adapted quickly to a considerably expanded and challenging role.

As will be more specifically outlined in the CEO's report, we have continued to pursue core functions and advocacy in key areas. Neither the appropriate recognition of MHNs in MBS and other funding structure nor the crucial revival of specialist recognition within the AHPRA framework are goals that will be achieved easily but they remain firm objectives.

While the college remains solvent, as evidenced by the Auditors' report, there have been significant financial challenges which are ongoing. The Board and the CEO have actively engaged in strategic measures to not only manage the organisation within its fiscal boundaries but to generate revenue to enable us to expand and undertake projects in the interests of members.

The International Journal of Mental Health Nursing remains a successful and well-recognised flagship of our profession and we once again thank Prof. Kim Usher and her team as well as all contributors.

The incoming board are clearly a competent and skilled team, well capable of meeting the challenges facing the college over the coming years. I have referred to some of those challenges but it is also timely to note those of reflecting the diversity of our membership and the people for whom we exist, as well as appropriate acknowledgement of, and evident respect for, the culture and traditions of Australia's first people.

We are in a time when the skills of Mental Health Nurses have never been more needed in our communities, despite the barriers to actually delivering those skills. We are a dedicated and resilient workforce, often under-recognised and unappreciated, but resilient and diligent in our duty to provide holistic care to our communities. Despite the understandable pessimism voiced from time to time, Mental Health Nursing has a bright future if we continue to respect and articulate our own professional identity and our worth, and the right of our communities to access the skills we offer. I congratulate the incoming board and look forward, as a member, to supporting their leadership in the coming years.

Tom Ryan
Vice President / Acting President.

Attachment 2 – 2020 CEO's Report

ACMHN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday 24th August 2020

CEO's REPORT

In September 2019 I was approached to assist ACMHN through a difficult period, both financially and operationally. I was not aware of the College, other than distantly via professional connections throughout my career in health, and I did not know any of the people involved. Perhaps that was a blessing, as I have been able to work without the bias of history, and have been able to ask difficult and hard questions of all that would speak with me. An initial two-month engagement has grown into a year, and I feel that much of the difficulties are under control, albeit with hard decisions, realignment of goals, pragmatic acceptance of the circumstances, and a significant amount of discussions with those wanting to understand all sides of the many stories that seem to always surface when there is significant change, for better or for worse.

Our initial aim was to stabilise the finances and operations of the College. With the Board, I developed a light strategic direction paper and we set about the task at hand. At that time, I was on a short-term appointment while the Board went to market to seek a permanent CEO. My background in management and administration in the health sector, allied with commercial and government experience, and time in the not-for-profit sector was appropriate for the situation the College was in. Having worked with the Board, membership, and staff for a few months I decided to apply for the role. I understand that a number of other potential candidates were interviewed, the Board deemed my application appropriate for the circumstances and offered me the role. I saw the good the College could do, the enthusiasm of all involved, and I was keen to develop plans for the future. We have now had many iterations of plans as the world and the environment the College operates in continually changes. I will work with the new Board and President after this AGM to determine a new plan for the way forward.

The College has undergone a transformation since the 2019 AGM, and will continue to evolve as the environment we operate in changes. The number of staff has reduced from a high of 15 to now 6 dedicated members. The roles of all have changed and are now multifaceted with everyone willingly pitching in to do whatever is needed to keep the College operating effectively while we reengineer operations and direction.

The finances were dire in 2019, and the initial outlook was for a loss in excess of \$650,000. However, with cost savings, revisiting of leases, rationalising of IT and other services, the previously mentioned reduction in staff numbers, and the potential realisation of assets, the College is approaching breaking even, which provides a base to build upon. There are ongoing challenges, and more work is to be done to ensure the viability of the College in the long term, however, with the support of the staff, the Board and in particular, the membership, we are well placed for the future.



the Australian College
of Mental Health Nurses Inc.

We have re-established relations with politicians, both state and federal, stakeholders, and bureaucrats across a number of departments. I was pleased to be able to bring my contacts from past roles in government at state and federal levels to assist with the messages of the College. We spent time early in 2020 working with various partners and government agencies, attempting to develop a pipeline of projects or other support to bolster the College's revenue. However, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic the attention of all these parties has shifted dramatically, and therefore our focus has moved with the times. We have focused our limited resources on continuing to provide member services, refining operations, working with government departments directly, writing submissions, and lobbying for our membership directly with decision makers. We have regular and extensive conversations at all levels, and the feedback is that we are recognised and listened to. Our input is sought, and for that input I often rely on those members that have answered the call to contribute to the future of the College. The expertise of the membership has provided insightful and powerful responses to all requests I have made, and for that I am eternally grateful.

The decision to cancel the 2020 International Conference was a difficult one, with a number of go/no go points mapped and managed from early in 2020. The final decision was made when the extent of the pandemic became evident, and the negative impacts on the conference's finances could be minimised. I am pleased to report that the investments of both time and money made for this year's conference have been rolled over to the 2021 conference, and all deposits have been recouped. We have started planning for 2021 in the traditional October timeslot, but with a wary eye on pandemic developments around the world. Ellen Fraser, our Events Manager, has been instrumental in the conference juggle with suppliers and venues, participants and the global events situation. Her expertise and pragmatic approach has been of great value to the College, and her support and management of the pivot to online events has stood us in good stead.

Ellen has also been working with the Board and the team to reinvigorate the Council of Branches. The recent Victorian Branch meeting, our committees, and the Special Interest Group meetings, now all online, indicate a real area of opportunity for and interest in the College. We have contingencies in place for holding the November Gold Coast Mental Health Nursing Forum online if needed, and in the longer term, there is consideration of an online International Conference as well.

A major drain on time and money for the College has been the IT systems. A number of projects, from website to membership, accounts to credentialing, have been underway for a number of years. However, the planning for integration of the various systems, ongoing maintenance and licencing costs have needed significant revisiting. Irene Dummett has been instrumental in the management of the alignment of the various systems.

The revamped website has gone live, and the rationalising of systems and licences continues, but the timescale is a long one as we must work with the resources we have, in both time and money. Thanks to the team for their tireless work on the website, wrestling it into a

more streamlined shape. They have also reinvigorated the 'Tuesday Times' into the 'College Connections', now more in keeping with our ability to provide suitable content in the required timeframes. The College Connections is developing into a good source of revenue and has recognition across the sector.

We had some projects for the federal government underway when I commenced working with the College. Unfortunately, there was not an active pipeline in place for future projects, and as such we have focused on making the existing ones contribute to the College. Irene, beyond her contributions in IT, is also our projects manager and senior office staffer. She has managed the changing nature of these projects while juggling education, IT, and other College functions while being the font of much corporate knowledge. Her dedication to the College and ability to be a sounding board for all staff has been critical to the success of our organisation this year.

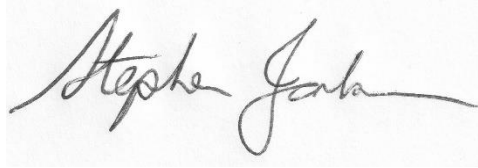
We have moved the accounting system online, are moving to change financial institutions, and outsourced the overall finance function for further savings. Lauren Tait continues to be the in-house finance officer, along with her ownership of credentialing, and many other tasks that need someone that can keep a trusted and watchful eye over their progress. Her relaxed approach, sense of humour, and ability to turn her hand to whatever is needed has been a credit to her and she is extremely valuable to the College. Our outsourced finance advisor and bookkeeper is Jillian Williams who has proved to be a boon with our accounts, dealing with the tax office, and the myriad of red tape and formal reporting required to comply with legislation.

Membership is the lifeblood of the College, and I am pleased to see that the membership numbers remain close to 2,800. There has been little overall change in membership levels in the past 12 months, and I thank Tina Ellis who has been streamlining and cleansing the membership database, processing renewals, and taking a pragmatic approach to the many member calls taken every day. She has also been active in testing and debugging IT systems, further reflecting the multi-tasking that all the College staff are undertaking to cover the work need to keep the College operating.

A significant change which is a flow-on from the reduction of staff numbers is floor space. We have re-negotiated the lease for the Canberra office and have reduced our footprint by nearly half. This is a significant cost saving, and will continue to be reviewed as we move into 2021. An unfortunate downside of reducing the staffing levels is that there are fewer to answer the phones, and therefore sometimes the leaving of messages is needed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board in place when I joined on that short-term contract. I did not know any of you then, but have learnt much and enjoyed the time working with you. President Eimear Muir-Cochrane and Vice-President Kim Foster provided insight and history, and were always accessible, certainly with an eye on governance and what was best for the College. The legal issues are now well behind the College, and the financial and emotional toll taken by that process was immense as the College responded to the actions bought against it. With that pressure, exacerbated by the pandemic, it was of no

great surprise when resignations occurred. I deeply thank Tom Ryan and Mark Powell for their rapid engagement with me to establish a new constitutionally correct Board which has been in place until this AGM.

The new Board, led by Mike Hazelton, has a wide range of pertinent skills, combined with enthusiasm and knowledge of the sector. I look forward to continuing the stabilisation process, developing a roadmap for the return to growth of the College, further online events, increasing the value of membership for the members, and implementation of ideas to potentially take the College in new directions.



Stephen Jackson
CEO