

## ACMHN Annual General Meeting 2022 – Minutes

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at 6:00pm (AEDT) on 23 November 2022.

The AGM was held via Zoom webinar.

Apologies were emailed to [registrations@acmhn.org](mailto:registrations@acmhn.org).

### 1. Welcome

Ellen Fraser delivered the acknowledgement of country, then provided a short overview of Zoom etiquette explaining the Q & A process with the Zoom chat and raised hand functions.

Michael Hazelton (President) welcomed participants to the AGM and invited Board members to introduce themselves. It was noted that Michael Blair is an outgoing Board Director, handing over the position to a new Council of Branches Chair when elected.

### 2. Attendance and apologies

Apologies: Rebekah Ashby, James Houghton, Shaynee Stanyon, Kim Foster, Paul Robson

There were no proxies noted in attendance.

### 3. Confirmation of the ACMHN AGM Minutes 2021

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

There were no objections or amendments.

*Moved: Eddie Robinson*

*Seconded: Lorna Moxham*

### 4. President's Report

Michael Hazelton tabled his report as the President and Chair of the Board of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. (Attachment 1)

*Moved to receive report: Peter Santangelo*

*Seconded: Rhonda Wilson*

### 6. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Stephen Jackson tabled his report as the CEO of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. (Attachment 2)

*Moved to receive report: Michael Blair*

*Seconded: Neil Spencer*

## **7. Finance Report**

Stephen Jackson tabled the finance report.

Audited financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2022 have been published.

It was noted that a financial reserve remains for the College and Michael Blair applauded the artful management of finances during Stephen Jackson's time as CEO. Expenditure on travel has significantly reduced with COVID-19 and the use of Zoom for regular communication without interstate travel.

*Moved to receive report: Roslyn McWilliam*

*Seconded: Brenda Happell*

It was noted that the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee was absorbed into the ACMHN Board. With Francis Acquah as Chair, a separate Finance, Audit and Risk Committee will be re-established in 2023 and operational for the financial year.

## **8. Engagement of Auditor**

Stephen Jackson recommended the re-engagement of Hardwick's as auditors for the 2022-2023 financial year. It was noted that this will be the fifth year of engaging Hardwick's and suggested that alternatives should be considered at the next AGM.

He sought the membership's support of the recommendation to engage Hardwick's again.

*Moved: Neil Spencer*

*Seconded: Pat Bradley*

## **9. Other submitted Business**

There were no other submitted Business items received.

All available reports and documents regarding the AGM will be made available on the website.

Attachment 1 – President’s Report 2022

**President’s Report to AGM 2022**

It is with pleasure that I present my President’s Report to the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN). A high priority for the Board in 2022 has been to move the College towards greater stability, improved services for members and enhanced reputation, by strengthening our financial situation, improving efficiency and prioritizing initiatives that will increase our influence and generate income.

Financially, a small deficit for 2021/22 will be offset against a very significant surplus from the recent International Conference on the Gold Coast. It was a great pleasure to catch up face-to-face with colleagues and friends at the conference and planning is already well underway for what is likely to be an even more successful conference to be held in Melbourne in 2023.

In my President’s Report at last year’s Annual General Meeting, I noted that when the current Board took up its responsibilities in 2020, the ACMHN faced declining membership numbers, a poor financial situation, limited capacity to provide services to members and communication systems that for the most part, were not fit for purpose. A number of our Special Interest Groups were inactive, and our professional development activities were on the wane. We had recently deferred the International Conference but were hopeful of it going ahead in 2022. What a difference a year makes! In 2022 the situation has improved, in some instances considerably, in all these areas.

There are many people to acknowledge and thank for this improvement in the fortunes of the ACMHN. To begin, I would like to thank our CEO Stephen Jackson and the staff in the National Office for their tireless work and boundless good humour. The extent of work that is required to keep an organization such as ours functioning is considerable, and doing so with very modest staffing resources is quite a challenge – the College staff have been up to that challenge!

I would like to thank all colleagues which have served or are currently serving as Directors. On average the Board has met monthly throughout the year and plan to continue doing so in 2023. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Vice-President Professor John Hurley. Out of necessity, I had to give John and the Board very short notice that I was temporarily stepping aside from the role of President due to ill-health early this year. John immediately took on the role of Interim President. I am very grateful that he did so and thank the Board for their understanding and support during the time in which I had to step aside. I am very pleased to have been able to resume as President at the Gold Coast Conference.

I would also like to thank those members who have continued with or have recently taken on positions of leadership in the ACMHN Branches and the Special Interest Groups (SIGs). In 2022 we have seen a consolidation and expansion of activities in the College Branches and SIGs, including the restoration of some branches that had gone into abeyance and the creation of new SIGs. This is already paying off in terms of new members, increasing influence and actual and potential income generation.

Finally, I would like to thank all members for your ongoing support for and contribution to the ACMHN and the wider profession of mental health nursing. I was reminded of the importance of this at the recent conference and was especially heartened by the number of first-time presenters and younger nurses who had clearly decided mental health nursing was for them. For me, as a person who has been a mental health nurse for over 40 years, this was a highlight of what turned out to be a wonderful conference experience. I am very much looking forward to the Melbourne conference next year

Members would be aware that the ACMHN has recently appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, who will commence in early 2023. Adrian Armitage brings an impressive track record of high-level success and well established professional and industry connections to the position, and I am very much looking forward to working with him from 2023 onwards. In welcoming Adrian, I want to again acknowledge and thank Stephen Jackson for his leadership in steering the ACMHN through what I am sure turned out to be a more challenging job than he could have imagined when he agreed to take up the position on an eight-week temporary basis some three years ago. Stephen has made an enormous contribution to the ACMHN during his time as CEO and on behalf of the Board and members of the ACMHN, I would like to extend sincere thanks for a job well done and best wishes for whatever the next stage of life brings.

I am looking forward to working with the Board and all members of the ACMHN in 2023 and wish you and your families a peaceful and joyous festive season.



Conjoint Professor Mike Hazelton

**President**  
**Australian College of Mental Health Nurses**

Attachment 2 – Chief Executive Officer’s Report 2022

**Chief Executive Officer’s Report to AGM 2022**

Another year of establishing a base for growth, despite headwinds of pandemics, changed governments, and delayed conferences. However, overall, a balanced and solid year setting the framework for a future of growth, value for members, and recognition of the college as a voice in the mental health arena.

I have now reached retirement age, and am into my 4th year with the College – an engagement originally planned to be 2 months in length. Earlier this year I advised the Board that I was planning to retire later in the year, and I am leaving the College at the end of this calendar year. Reflecting both my own and the Board’s wishes, we have worked together to identify a successor and to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. The arrival of a new Federal Government provides a perfect break in advocacy proceedings to bring in a new CEO, and the ability to retain the current Board until the 2023 AGM provides a stable framework for the new CEO. Aligned with both of these is a stable financial situation with growth opportunities and a stable workforce with good corporate knowledge.

My successor is Adrian Armitage, currently the CEO of the Australian Medical Students Association, based in Canberra, and networked extremely well at federal political and bureaucratic levels, as well as the jurisdictional levels. He has exemplary knowledge and experience in building organisations such as the College, and has family in both nursing and psychology. I am very pleased that the process of the Board’s CEO Search Committee identified and recruited Adrian. After an EOI for the role was invited from the membership, a formal search was instituted. Many applications were received, a longlist identified, a shortlist interviewed, and a unanimous decision reached. Adrian will officially start with the College in January, and I will finish at the end of this year, although I will be available for consultation in the new year. Adrian and I, plus key staff, are already in discussions about both operations and strategy. I look forward to watching with interest the growth of the College I have no doubt will occur.

The past year has been dominated by the Conferences both being cancelled and successfully run. The Gold Coast Conference was organised and largely prepared for in FY2021/22, with the actual conference delivered in FY2022/23, however I must mention it here as the effort that went into both cancelling, postponing, then renegotiating, and finally preparing for a successful conference was immense. The effects of cancelled conferences, forward payments, negotiations of rates, expended and unexpended expenses, changes in costs, building in contingency and assessing risk factors was a difficult set of factors to reflect in the College’s financial system. In effect, there is a College FY which



relates to the traditional July to June fiscal year, and the Conference FY, which runs from somewhere September/October for 12 months. This is a sensible arrangement when the conferences go ahead each year, as expenses and costs balance out over the delivered conference and conference being prepared for despite crossing FYs. However, when conferences are delayed or cancelled, that financial equilibrium is disrupted and the financials are difficult to follow. Our auditors are across the situation and have adapted well, and while not delivering a surplus this FY, we have notion success once abnormal unexpected expenses are factored in. Two key expenses not expected were a large increase in insurance costs due to legal action in 2019/20, and a previous Board's requested legal opinions of various matters.

A significant portion of the office's limited resources were expended through internal reviews and governance issues. The Constitution review was put on hold after an external legal opinion was sought, but will be reconsidered in the new year, along with a move to a company structure. The new CEO has a strong governance background and will provide a fresh set of eyes on the matter.

Significant time was spent moving advocacy issues forward with Federal and State governments. Positive responses and genuine interest in the clear identification of qualified Mental Health Nurses is supported, but with the announcements of elections, progress has been difficult. The College has gained seats at various committees and reviews, including Better Access and the MBS reviews, the Federal Mental Health Workforce Taskforce, and other bodies. The College's opinion has been sought during the year, with a focus on the availability of a skilled mental health workforce and the initiatives to address that workforce. The media is now regularly in discussions with the College, and our views and contributions to the MH workforce are highly regarded. My particular thanks to the members of the college that contributed their expertise as, and when, needed.

The focus of the College for the new year needs to be growth and emergence from the pandemic. The opportunities with the new governments are real, and the need to drive advocacy at all levels requires an external focus of both the Board and the office staff. The three major income areas for the college underpinning the delivery of services and advocacy work to and for members are membership, advertising, and events. These are augmented in other diverse revenue streams, but they are the foundation of the College. These must be front and centre going forward.

We have continued with six staff, and the planned increase in staffing has been put on hold with the delay of the Conference, effects on revenue, and continuation of the pandemic. However, the existing staff have leveraged our social media and increased press visibility to improve our reputation and weight in the government spheres. The fortnightly College Connections Newsletter and separate Events Newsletter continue to gain positive reviews



and have proven winners. The staff continue to manage many competing interests and have developed strong relationships in the active membership. I am pleased to say we have diversity of staff and our mutual support has proved strong during the difficult times.

Key to the smooth operation of the College is Irene. A long-term staff member of the College, Irene is our Operations Manager, responsible for the day-to-day operations of the office. Her skills as a project manager, as well as her corporate knowledge of the College has proved valuable and a real asset, as has the people management of the office staff, necessary with the small team we have delivering the raft of services that we do.

Of course, events don't occur without specialist skills in that area, and Ellen continues to be our Events Manager, with a major focus on the conferences, ably supported by the team in the office.

Compliments to the staff for a year well handled, to Sophie, Bethany, Hannah, Lauren, Jillian, and Angus.

All staff have supported the SIGs and Branches, with the Chair of the Branches contributing to the growth and reestablishment of new branches and SIGs, although some committees do need more focus. The Council of Branches is an active forum and will see new leadership after the AGM year. One of the key findings from the conference was the interest in branches and the plethora of special interests awaiting establishment in the wings. Recognition of the ongoing stellar work in the WA, Northern NSW, Qld and NT Branches, and to the new and reconstituted branches being reinvigorated now.

Membership is the lifeblood of the College, and we continue to hold at about 2,500 members with around 1,000 Credentialed. This is a key focus for growth in the new year.

I would like to recognise the 1st Board that brought me to the College in difficult times, led by Eimear Muir-Cochrane. Thanks then go to the 2nd College Board I worked with, led by Tom Ryan until August 2020, for their pragmatic understanding and recognition of the desperate need for College viability. The 3rd Board from August 2020, led by Mike Hazelton, had a wide range of governance skills, combined with knowledge of the sector. The 4th Board, led by John Hurley and Mike Hazelton, being a reconstituted Board through appointments and engagements, is providing a stable base now for the next 12 months and the inducting of the new CEO. Carefully following Constitutional rules on numbers, terms, appointments, and elections, the 2023 AGM will see a full election of both President and Directors, and possibly with the view to convert the College to a company rather than the current Association structure.

On that note, I would like to thank Bernie Stefan-Rasmus for his long time representation of the College as the South Australian Public Officer required by SA Association law. He is

stepping down, and a past President, Professor Eimear Muir-Cochrane will take on the role, with the view to moving away from the location based officials required currently.

I look forward to a focus on growth through membership and a continuation of the operational stabilisation process, while developing a roadmap for the return to growth of the College. A review of the Strategic Plan in concert with the new CEO is planned and will be invaluable.

Thank you to the members that have supported me, and in particular to Mike and John.



Stephen Jackson

**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Australian College of Mental Health Nurses**