

Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law

Minutes

5pm (Eastern Australian Daylight Time) Sunday 24 September 2018

1. Opening

Bernadette welcomed all attendees to the 2018 AGM

2. Attendance and apologies

Present: Bernadette Richards (President), Rachel Ankeny (Vice President) Lynn Woodward (Secretary), Camilla Scanlan (Treasurer), Katrine Del Villa, Jeanne Snelling, Stacy Carter, Ainsley Newson, Nikola Stepanov, Sunday Pam, Adrian Dabscheck, John Waugh, Anne-Maree Farrell, Judith Kennedy, Vicki Xafix, Lyn Gilbert, Tamra Lysaght, Wendy Lipworth, Angus Dawson, Deborah Zion, Ian Kerridge, Paul Komesaroff, Christopher Jordens, Michael Chapman, Wendy Rogers, George Skowronski, Courtney Hempton, Cynthia Forlini, Geraldene Mackay, Nicola Pritchard, Conor Brophy, Andrew Crowden, Paul Macneill, Richard Matthews, Chris Degeling, Jaklin Elliott, Chris Mayes, Jacqueline Savard, Danya Vears, Jonnie Kennedy, Edwina Light, P Gopalakrishnakone, Julie Letts, Morgan Carpenter, Deirdre Fetherstonhaugh, Lynn Gillam, Malcolm Parker, Anson Fehross, Selina Metternick-Jones, Jemimah Thompson, Caitlin Davis, Helen Smith, Malcolm Smith, Rob McDowall, David Hunter, Gordon McGurk, Belinda Bennett, Ben White, Lisa Dive, Bek McWhirter, Jon Wardle, David Carter, Julia Duffy, Sam Boyle, Margaret Abercrombie, Ben Gray, Hazel Irvine, Etivina Lovo, Eliza McEwan, Sunday Pam

Apologies: Neil Pickering, Clare Delany

3. Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a correct record, proposed by Ainsley Newson and seconded by Vicki Xafis.

4. Presidents Report

No major issues. Focus last year on streams, with stream meetings and no conference, seemed to help strengthen the streams. Announced 2019 conference would be held in Dunedin, NZ. Reported discussions at committee meeting about just having stream meetings in 2020 and then next conference 2021. Stream meetings badged in such a way that participants could present papers, which may assist in being able to apply for funding to attend. 2021 conference- some interest in hosting in Adelaide and Hobart – to follow up.

Call for more volunteers to join Twitter roster.

5. Secretary Report

3 meetings held this year, 2 teleconference and 1 at conference. No particular topic dominated discussions.

6. Treasurer's report

See attached documents which were circulated prior to AGM, and which were shown on screen at AGM. Finances – all looking good. Have about \$24k readily accessed and 2 trust accounts, each with

about \$10k in. At presenting holding some money for HEAL, but this will change as how HEAL is funded has changed, so AABHL will no longer hold this money for them.

7. Membership report

Numbers stable, currently 188 members. It was announced that Grant Gillet had been offered life membership, he was honoured and accepted.

8. Conference

Townsville conference – very good numbers, 178 individual registrants (get details from Anna). Was some discussion over abstracts needing to fit into streams, which not all papers do easily, with request that this is addressed (there was the option for this conference to have as stream, or other).

2019 New Zealand conference – will be a joint conference with New Zealand Bioethics network. There won't be an overall theme for the conference.

9. JBI matters

Paul Komersarof spoke to this. Journal aims to provide an interdisciplinary site about ethics and law in relation to healthcare, to achieve this purpose editions put together as symposiums – articles from across disciplines all exploring one topic – Paul called for ideas for symposiums for future editions. In relation to issue of open access, JBI have been in discussion about this with Springer, exploring utilizing multiple avenues to access articles without compromising relationship with Springer – will need to ensure this matches requirements by funding bodies, universities etc.

Any problem with members not getting their copy of JBI, or for those not wanting a hard copy of the journal should contact JBI – Bronwyn.

10. Stream updates

All streams held events during the conference, or as pre-conference events.

Research stream – Andrew Crowden stepping down as stream leader, Kandy White to remain for another year. Lisa Eckstein put in EOI to be co-leader, this was accepted by committee.

Health Law stream – Malcolm Smith moving onto committee, wishes to step down as stream leader, has asked for EOI to take over.

11. Proposal for Policy change

Following lunchtime discussions there was a proposal for Constitutional working party

Organisational support should then be provided to form a working group to explore constitutional and policy amendments with respect to the current 'neutrality' position.

This will include consideration of uncoupling sponsorship and position statements.

Widespread discussion across the organisation will take place and the working group will table formal proposals at the next AGM.

Call to broaden this discussion to reexamine whole constitution to see if it was still fit for purpose. Response to this was that there was a clearly defined initial question to look at, should start with this, and can consider expanding.

Vote on Proposal for Constitutional working party – passed unanimously

Position statement proposal by Angus Dawson

We ask the AGM to approve the following proposal:

- 1. Circulate a position statement on mandatory detention of Asylum Seekers to AABHL's membership by email later this week.*
- 2. Ask AABHL's membership to approve the statement (yes or no) by 22nd October 2018.*
- 3. If two-thirds of the membership vote in favour, it will be adopted and published as the position of AABHL on mandatory detention of Asylum Seekers.*

Question – If this is supported, as an exception to policy, how does the process work for other issues? So while this proposal may have 2/3 membership support, what about other issues that may not get that degree of agreement?

How this works would be explored by the proposed working group.

In response to proposal

- This may be a statement, but not a position statement, could be a membership statement.
- Question around point 3 – 2/3s of the membership vote in favour – is this 2/3 of members, or 2/3 of members who respond – was agreed that it would be 2/3 of members who respond
- Was raised on how decided that 2/3s was an appropriate number, can this number be defended?
- This should not be seen as a precedential vote, but as an exception as the constitution does not allow any such statements as this time.
- Suggested could do this as a resolution of this conference, rather than a position statement
- At lunchtime discussions had brought up idea of issuing a statement of members – so with names and titles of those supporting, rather than statement of AABHL, this could be done now, rather than waiting for vote in October.
- Specific point was raised around those not wishing to have their name associated with any statement (although they may support it), specifically someone on a visa and are concerned making a statement may affect their visa status. In response to this it was suggested that when people vote on the proposal they can nominate if they wish their name and details to be included with the proposal. So would be voting Yes or No on proposal, then saying whether they are happy for their details to be published with it.

New proposal

1. Circulate a statement, from members of the Townsville conference, on mandatory detention of Asylum Seekers to AABHL's membership by email later this week.
2. Ask AABHL's membership to approve the statement (yes or no) by 22nd October 2018.

3. If two-thirds of the responding membership vote in favour, it will be adopted and published as the special resolution of the AABHL Townsville conference on mandatory detention of Asylum Seekers.

4. Members to be asked to indicate if they are happy to have their name published with the statement

Proposal put forward by Angus Dawson and seconded by Chris Jordens.

Updated motion passed

12. Committee Membership Update

The President thanked leaving committee members – Nikola Stepanov and Ben White. Welcomed new members – Malcolm Smith, Courtney Hempton and Anne-Maree Farrell. Neil Pickering stood down after 3 years since last appointed to committee, nominated again, so re-appointed to the committee.

Specific thanks were expressed to Camilla who stood down from Treasurer's position, and also as admin support. Special note was made of her many years of support. Jaklin Eliot to take over this position, vacating her committee position.

Meeting closed at 6:15pm.