

Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law

Minutes

12.40pm (New Zealand Daylight Time) Saturday 23 November 2019

1. Opening

Bernadette welcomed all attendees to the 2019 AGM

2. Attendance and apologies

Present: Bernadette Richards (President), Kate Betts, Stacy Carter, Angus Dawson, Nathan Emmerich, Jennifer Jones, Christopher Jordens, Tamra Lysaght, Rosalind McDougall, Malcolm Smith, Mark Taylor, Tina Cockburn, Belinda Bennett, Fiona McDonald, Lisa Eckstein, Ben Gray, Courtney Hempton, Hazel Irvine, Trish Johnson, Wendy Lipworth, Dominique Martin, Pat McConville, Rebekah McWhirter, Ainsley Newson, Catherine Mills, Malcolm Parker, Helen Smith, Colin Thomson, Emma Tumilty, Tim Vines, Neera Bhatia, Cynthia Forlini.

Apologies: Rachel Ankeny, Lynn Woodward, Jaklin Elliott, Cameron Stewart

3. Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a correct record, proposed by Mal Parker and seconded by Ben Gray.

4. President's Report

Bernadette thanked the committee for their time and commitment, and in particular highlighted the hard work and time commitment of those who volunteered for the working party. Of note has been the negative financial activity over the past twelve months, these will be addressed in the Treasurer's Report. Bernadette thanked the stream leaders for their work, and noted that the streams are a strength of AABHL, given its diverse membership.

The new AABHL website was previewed and Bernadette thanked Jaklin Elliott for all of her work on this (and other significant review and revision activities) over the past year. There was a call for images to populate the website that reflect the organisation. Bernadette reported that the new developers have been good to work with, and the new website is a much improved interface for the public and membership.

The Dunedin conference organisers, in particular Neil, were thanked and their energy and hard work acknowledged.

5. Secretary's Report

There have been 3 AABHL committee meetings in 2019, and an additional Extraordinary meeting which was held in 2018 following the AABHL conference. The Extraordinary meeting addressed issues arising from the 2018 AGM, in particular around the Conference Statement and the Constitutional Review. The Constitutional Review was also the subject of discussion in each of the AABHL meetings for 2019. Other major issues covered included updates on stream activities, the development of the new AABHL website and upcoming AABHL conferences. AABHL communication was also raised in the meetings; both the future of the AABHL newsletter and the introduction of new generic email addresses to deal with AABHL communication were discussed in response to the high volume of email

correspondence the Executive were receiving. Dr Rachel Ankeny (Vice President) and Dr Nathan Emmerich (general committee member) were elected unopposed.

6. Treasurer's report

Membership is stable, noted NUS joined as institutional member. Expenditure has been up this year owing to rectification of superannuation obligations, and other oversights. Payrise for admin support to be revisited next year. JBI membership for all AABHL members to be discussed as a possible cost saving by the committee.

7. Membership report

Attached.

8. Outcome of Constitutional Review Working Party

Mal Parker reported on the review, initiated at the 2018 conference. A proposal had been put forward that the organisation should change its policy on issuing statements on bioethical issues. A special statement was issued by the conference on the issue of asylum seekers, and a working party was established to review the constitution and policies. Met in March: Paul McNeil drafted a policy on policies (passed by the membership); proposed change to allow issuing of position statements by AABHL (not passed by the membership). A report of additional potential changes to the constitution is forthcoming. Concerns were raised about the low numbers of votes submitted, and there was discussion around procedures for voting and continuing the conversation on this issue.

9. Conferences

2019: Neil Pickering reported 185 registrations for the Dunedin conference. Received seeding money from the AABHL. The conference is on track to break even.

2020: Lisa Eckstein and Bek McWhirter are pleased to welcome everyone to Hobart next year in November.

10. JBI matters

Bernadette reported on Paul Komaseroff's behalf, whose report is attached.

Colin Thompson noted that the financial success of the Journal introduces questions about how best to manage the profits. A number of members requested increased transparency relating to finances and the contract with Springer. JBI's website is in need of urgent updating, and includes a major error relating to affiliation with the correct Associations.

11. Stream updates

Clinical ethics – Hazel Irvine thanked AABHL for support running the clinical ethics workshops. Clare Delaney and Anne Preisz have replaced the previous co-stream leaders. Expressions of interest sought for a representative from New Zealand to take over from Hazel.

Health Law stream – Neera Bhatia reported that the pre-conference workshop went well. The theme was emerging technologies, and was well attended by a diverse range of people.

Research ethics stream – Lisa Eckstein reported that stream activities had been hampered by travel funding constraints, but plans are being made for 2020 conference in Hobart.

Teaching ethics stream – leader position is vacant and stream is currently inactive. Expressions of interest in leading the stream are sought.

Public health stream – Angus reported that a symposium is being held this afternoon on pandemic vaccination and public health ethics. Jenny Kaldor to join Angus as co-leader once she officially joins as a member.

Empirical ethics stream – Stacy Carter reported that the stream held the traditional informal drinks session at this conference, which was very well attended, and there are plans for a pre-conference workshop for next year (as well as the drinks!). There are also plans for the resources section of the new website.

Student and ECR stream – Cynthia reported on the Student/ECR pre-conference workshop, supported by AABHL and Deakin Health Ethics. Bernadette Richards gave the keynote, and flash mentor sessions were held with the attendees. Workshop was well attended. Requested suggestions for people working in bioethics outside of academia for future events.

12. Reports of Local Activities

Local groups, such as HEAL, are no longer active. This role is now filled by the streams.

13. Committee Membership Update

Attached.

14. Next AGM

To be held at the Hobart conference next November, details to be advised.

Meeting closed at 1:45pm.