

**Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law**

**AGM Minutes**

**5 pm (AEDST) Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Chair:** Bernadette Richards, (President)

**Minute Taker:** Tamra Lysaght (Secretary)

**In Attendance:**

Bernadette Richards (President), Rachel Ankeny (Vice President), Tamra Lysaght (Secretary), Jaklin Elliott (Treasurer), Ainsley Newson, Belinda Bennett, Malcolm Parker, Wendy Lipworth, Camilla Scanlan, Cynthia Forlini, Stacy Carter, Helen Irving, Monique Jones, Neil Pickering, Lynley Anderson, Lisa Lehrer Dive, Lisa Eckstein, Neera Bhatia, Jackie Leach Scully, Dominique Martin, Michael Ashby, Paul Komesaroff

**Proxies:** Jaqueline Savard nominated Dominique Martin as proxy

**1. Opening and Welcome**

Bernadette Richards opened the meeting with an acknowledgment of the traditional land custodians and welcomed members. The AGM this year is held within the 2021 Virtual Conference of AABHL. Bernadette noted the wisdom of the decision to hold the conference virtually this year given the ongoing challenges with the global pandemic. It is hoped the conference can be convened next year in Tasmania.

**2. Apologies**

Noted apologies from Jaqueline Savard and Rebekah McWhirter.

**3. Minutes of previous AGM**

Ainsley Newson noted an error in Lisa Eckstein's name to be corrected. Minutes were otherwise accepted as a correct record, moved by Jaklin Elliott and Cynthia Forlini.

**4. President's report**

Bernadette Richards noted the inactivity over the last two years since the pandemic broke but noted the resilience of the community as demonstrated in the conference registration this year. Bernadette thanked the organizing committee and the co-Chairs in particular (Mark Talyor and Ann-Maree Kelly) for taking lead at very short notice, as well as the stream leads for their contributions to a successful conference.

## 5. Secretary's report

Tamra Lysaght reported that only two committee meetings were held in the last year as the pandemic has impacted the professional lives of everyone. Matters discussed at the two meetings primarily related to JBI and the conference.

## 6. Treasurer's report

Jaklin Elliott tabled the Membership Report and Financial Position as of November 2021 explaining that AABHL is in a health position with almost \$15,942 in assets minus liabilities (Annex A). Jaklin noted some minor typographical errors on the report to be amended. The bulk of costs arise from the administrative support, accounting fees and JBI subscription (\$15k). Losses from unexpected costs last year and website updates have been recouped and saving have been made with the switch to STRIPE billing. Jaklin suggested that the funds currently sitting in an interest-bearing account could be better utilised to support community activities.

## 7. Membership report

Jaklin Elliott reported that membership was extended for 12 months with conference registration and currently stands at 145 (119 individuals, 6 institutions, 14 students/unwaged, 6 life members).

Ainsley Newson asked about student membership fees and whether the current pricing provides fair value for them. Jacklin suggested institutional membership for students as an alternative although Ainsley noted that universities were financially constrained. Ainsley also noted problems with the full time requirement as some students are only studying part time but are not fully waged to pay for membership fees. The student/unwaged fee is currently \$143pa. Bernadette responded that the AABHL Committee with review the fees at the next meeting.

**Action Points: Tamra to table an agenda item to review student registration fees at the next Committee Meeting in 2022.**

## 2022 Conference plans

Lisa Eckstein reported that they will attempt to organise the twice postponed conference in Tasmania for November 2022. Rebekah McWhirter will be the primary conference organiser with support from her and Anna (?). Costs from the postponed conference have been rolled over with only minor expenses lost for conference vendor services already provided. The feasibility of an in-person conference next year will be assessed in the coming months and will be contingent on international travel conditions and availability of funding for members to attend. The option of a hybrid conference was discussed as having lower risks given the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic although experiences with the format have been mixed.

The conference vendors have strongly advised against a hybrid and either doing it completely online or in person.

### 9. JBI matters

Bernadette Richards reported that the Committee had been misled about the availability of funds from JBI and that no funding will be transferred to AABHL.

Paul Komesaroff shared that JBI has a strong community with growing ~281k readership and increasing Journal Impact Factor. The 5-year JIF is currently 1.6 but is expected to increase with two special issues on the pandemic that were open access and are highly cited. Ongoing challenges remain with timeframes and reviewer response with mixed success in internationalising the readership and authorship. The contract with Springer was renegotiated in 2017, which increased income to \$55k per annum to provide editorial stipends and royalties. Bronwyn Morrell is the paid part time production manager and Edwina Light is assisting with the online social media translation. JBI's account has current surplus but there are recurrent profits as the costs are balanced against income each year. The journal does well due to significant pro-bono contribution from Paul and Michael Ashby and others on the editorial team. Michael acknowledged the production team (Bronwyn and Edwina).

Paul noted that AABHL pays for \$15k journal subscription but there is no obligation to pay it and most members already have access to it through their institutional affiliations. Paper production has become obsolete and he suggests that AABHL only provide e-access to those members who do not have through an institutional subscription.

### 10. Subscription matters

Bernadette explained that AABHL could better utilise the funds expended on the JBI subscription, such as funding bursaries and subsidies for ESR and students to attend meetings and become members. A vote was put to the attendees with the following options:

1. Maintain paper copies for all members. This will cost AABHHL ~\$15k pa.
2. Provide electronic access for all members. This will cost AABHHL ~\$9k pa
3. Providing electronic access only for members without institutional access. This will cost AABHL ~\$70 per member pa.
4. Provide no access to JBI (electronic or paper) for any members at no cost

Option 3 was unanimously voted (22/22) with a quorum present. Members who do not have institutional access can contact Jaklin Elliot to access the journal individually.

### 11. AABHL streams, activities and membership

Clinical ethics: None

Empirical ethics: Stacy Carter reported there were activities outside the virtual conference. The co-leads are stepping down and looking for volunteers to take over the stream leadership.

Health law: Neera Bhatia reported there were no activities outside the virtual conference. Megan Pictor is now also co-lead.

Public health ethics: None

Research ethics: Lisa Eckstein reported there were no activities outside the virtual conference. She is also looking for new lead/co-lead.

ECR/S: Cynthia Forlini reported that the stream has a new structure and new co-leads (Serene Ong, Steph Jowett and Courtney Hempton). They convened seven events; navigating academia, ask me anything sessions, WIP sessions; secret squirrel; choosing you own adventure. Cynthia is stepping down to join the AABHL Committee.

## **12. Election of Committee members, if required**

There were six Committee member nominations: four new members (Belinda Bennett, Cynthia E Forlini, Tina Cockburn and Simon Walker) and two re-standing (Courtney Hempton and Neil Pickering). No election was required. See Annex B for nominees.

## **12. Any other matters.**

Jalkin noted that the Teaching Ethics stream leads have launched a podcast, which AABHL can help promote and facilitate on the website.

## **13. Next AGM**

The next AGM is being planned for November 2022 in Hobart.

## ANNEX A

Corrected

### AABHL Membership Report & Financial Position Nov 2021

Membership Details						
	Individuals	Institutions	Students /unwaged	Honorary/Life	Complimentary	Total (excludes institutional)
Nov-21	119	6 (60m)	14	6		139

  

Financial details	
<b>Assets</b>	
Currently held at bank credit account	23,001
Expected membership renewal income Dec 2021-Nov 2022	16,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,737</b>
<b>Liabilities</b> expected future commitments – 12 months	
Springer Publishing for Journal of Bioethical Inquiry for all members	15,000
Administrative assistance (12 months)	13,750
Website hosting; domain name; security;	700
Accountancy: compliance with ASIC/ABN/Superannuation	2,000
eWay billing	150
ASIC records	500
Bank account fees	195
AUDIT book-keeping	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,795</b>
<b>Assets minus Liabilities</b>	<b>\$15,942</b>

All Liabilities based upon previous 12-months' transactions

## ANNEX B

### Nominations for committee positions

Name	For	Nominated by
Belinda Bennett	Committee member	Ben Mathews Ben White
Courtney Hempton*	Committee member	Neera Bhatia Tamra Lysaght
Cynthia E Forlini	Committee member	Dominique Martin Emma Tumilty
Tina Cockburn	Committee member	Bernadette Richards Ben White
Neil Pickering*	Committee member	Simon Walker John McMillan
Simon Walker	Committee member	Neil Pickering John McMillan

Positions available – 6 committee members.

\* Nominees are re-standing for committee membership

### Nominees for Committee Member Statements

#### **Belinda Bennett**

Belinda Bennett is Professor of Health Law and New Technologies in the School of Law at QUT, and leads the 'Technology, Innovation and Health' theme within the Australian Centre for Health Law Research at QUT. Her research engages with the legal, regulatory and social issues in new health care technologies and global public health. Belinda is Deputy Editor of the *Journal of Law and Medicine*; member of the editorial board of *Journal of Law and the Biosciences*; and member of the international editorial board of *International Journal of Law in Context*.

#### **Courtney Hempton**

Courtney Hempton is an interdisciplinary researcher. She holds a Master of Bioethics, and has research interests in health law, policy, and practice, particularly the regulation of dying and death, ageing, and mental health. Courtney is currently a PhD Candidate with the Monash Bioethics Centre at Monash University, and is additionally engaged across a number of research and teaching appointments. Courtney serves on the Monash Health Clinical Ethics Committee and the AABHL Student and Early Career Researcher Stream Committee, and has previously served as a member of the AABHL Committee.

### **Cynthia E Forlini**

Cynthia is Lecturer in Health Ethics & Professionalism at Deakin University. In 2017, she co-founded the AABHL Student/Early Career Researcher Stream, which she led until the end of 2021. Under Cynthia's direction, the S/ECR Stream has provided new opportunities for learning, mentorship, and skill development for students and ECRs in AABHL. She has ensured the S/ECR Stream's sustainability by introducing a committee structure. As an AABHL Committee Member, Cynthia would contribute a breadth of national (e.g. Brain Science Network EMCR Steering Committee) and international (e.g. International Neuroethics Society) committee experience where she has worked on (1) creating opportunities and representation for students and ECRs and (2) ensuring committees adequately reflect changes and progress in the fields they represent.

### **Neil Pickering**

Neil is Associate Professor in the Bioethics Centre at the University of Otago. Until recently he was Chair of the New Zealand National Ethics Advisory Committee, advising the Minister of Health. He has a long association with the AABHL, and before that the ABA, helping organise conferences a number of times and serving on the AABHL committee since AABHL's inception. His most recent research and publications are focussed on competence and capacity in health-care decision making, and covert treatment in a cross-cultural context.

### **Simon Walker**

Simon is a lecturer at the Bioethics Centre at the University of Otago. He convenes the Ethics teaching for three campuses of the Otago Medical School, and contributes to the ethics teaching in several of other health professional programs at the University of Otago. He is also the Convener of the Otago Medical School's Professional Practice Sub-Committee. His research is focused on end of life care, philosophy of identity, philosophy of psychiatry, and ethics teaching. He has served on the organising committees for AABHL conferences hosted by the Otago Bioethics Centre, and the New Zealand Bioethics Conference.

### **Tina Cockburn**

I am Co-Director of the Australian Centre for Health Law Research (ACHLR); Co-Lead ACHLR's Planning for Healthy Ageing Program; a member of Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Queensland Law Society Health and Disability Law Committee. Previously I was a solicitor at Feez Ruthning (now Allens). My research concerns promoting human rights and access to justice by vulnerable people:

a) *medical law* – healthcare communication (consent; open disclosure); medical litigation; health professional regulation; innovative treatment/new technologies;

b) *elder and disability law* – capacity; supported/substitute decision making; elder abuse; NDIS; estate planning;

c) *children* – civil liability, compensation and redress for child abuse.