

# **AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY FOR BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY INC**

## **Minutes from 65<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**

The 65<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Australian Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Inc. was held from 11:00-11:42 hours (AEST) on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 zoom (<https://uqz.zoom.us/j/86876358976>).

A quorum of over 20 people were reached. 47 individuals were logged in on zoom.

Dominic Ng (Secretary) chaired proceedings and began with Acknowledgement of Country.

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Megan O'Mara, Simon Williams, Mike Ryan, Kate Quinlan and Melissa Pittman.
2. **Confirmation of the minutes of Annual General Meeting No 64.**

Motion to put forward the minutes of 64<sup>th</sup> AGM for confirmation by Sebastian Furness and seconded by Marc Kvensakul. The minutes were confirmed and noted.

### 3. **President's Report**

Jacqui Matthews (President) acknowledged the Gadigal Land and Eora nation and delivered the following report.

It's been a difficult year on top of an already difficult year for everybody. And its been challenging being a research and/or an educator because of the background of the pandemic, lockdowns, travel restrictions and online everything, as well as funding levels from major granting bodies, unexpected rules about publications. All of us are tired and looking forward to progressing out of the current situation.

It's hard also for a society like ours, dependent on a model of conferences for getting our members together from around the country, and funding our other activities like prizes and supporting STA for lobbying government.

But the things that have been really positive are how quickly educators have responded to the challenges of online and hybrid teaching and ensuring an authentic and engaging learning outcomes for students and our next generation of scientists and citizens. Also how online lecture series have opened up sharing of information around the country and how many of the SIGs have managed to run local or virtual meetings in person when possible or virtually when not. The education meeting on Tuesday and the Sydney SPG Spring symposium immediately following this meeting are great examples of this.

As we start to progress out of the current state of the pandemic into a world with more travel and opportunities for meetings we are still hopeful of running an in person COMBIO meeting in Melbourne in ~12 months. But I hope we'll keep some of the new connections, developed out of adversity, in place.

Thank you to the Executive - Dom, Tatiana, Mark and Joel and the rest of council including all of our state reps for keeping things running . And thanks to Joel – for his years as president elect, president and currently past president. This is his last AGM in his current role although he will formally step down at the end of the year.

#### 4. **Treasurer's Report**

- **Overall financial position** of the Society has stabilized compared to that of 2020.
  - Revenue was down \$126,810 in 2020-2021 due to the absence of an Australia-based conference
  - Expenditure down \$188,270 in the same period
- **2020-2021 financial year** showed an operating loss of \$5,013.
- **2019-2020** operating loss was **\$66,473**.
- **Items to note:**
  - ASBMB only meetings are unlikely to be a major driver of income for the society, and we will need to adjust meeting formats to adapt to this.
  - The postponement of COMBIO2020 in Melbourne due to COVID-19 meant we were without a significant injection of additional revenue for 2 years, and with online conferences becoming more prevalent we will need to consider the likely impact of this on society finances long term.
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- We need to sustain or increase membership and to ensure both the long-term viability and profitability of Combio/ASBMB meetings
- Thanks to Brian Hiley at Priestleys, Ian Price, Sally & Chris Jay and Fellow members of the executive

A question was asked whether income decrease was due to pandemic or structural. Treasurer indicated that income impairment is mainly due to lack of profit from meetings which was impacted by pandemic. In the absence of meetings, the society operates at a structural loss of ~20K per year. In the absence of income from meetings, changes in the way the society operates will need to be considered.

John Mattick asked why reserves are not invested in manner to attract higher returns. Treasurer responded that due to recent uncertainty in income and society activities, reserves needed to be readily accessible to cover operating expenses. This prevented committing reserves to investment vehicles that might have provided higher return on investment.

#### 5. **Fees for 2021/2022**

Membership fees for the year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

**2% CPI Increase**

	2020/21	2021/22	(3 yr)
Ordinary Members:	\$137	\$140	\$335
Student Members:	\$44	\$45	\$107
Sustaining Members:	\$414	\$423	\$1015
Retired Members:	\$59	\$60	\$142
Member O/S:	\$64	\$65	\$157

Marc put forward a motion to apply the above fees for next membership cycle. A zoom poll was conducted amongst members present with the vote count was 33 AYE to 0 NAY. The motion was passed.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

The ASBMB membership were relative stable over the past year: 889 total members in 2020-2021 compared to 894 in 2019-2020.

## 6. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws

A motion was put forward to amend Section 13 of the Constitutional By-Laws relating to Special Interest Groups ([Appendix I](#))

Brett Collins asked for clarification around ensuring membership of SIG sponsored speakers/chairpersons who were nonmembers. Secretary responded that this could be ensured by including membership as part of SIG sponsored prizes.

Phillip Nagley indicated that the wording of proposed amendments could be open to misinterpretation and should be rewritten to better define certain terms such as “Groups”, “Leaders” and “Chairpersons. The suggestion was put forward that members could vote for proposed changes in principle with confirmation of specific wording at the next Executive/Council Meeting.

This proposal and proposed amendments to Section 13 was voted on by members by show of hands and the motion was passed.

## 7. Elections to Council.

Single nominations were received for all positions on Council for 2022. Red text highlight new members of ASBMB Council for 2022. Thanks were given for the service of retiring Council Members; Joel Mackay and Monika Mucha.

President	Jacqui Matthews
President-Elect	<b>Ross Hannan</b> (Joel Mackay retired)
Secretary	Dominic Ng
Treasurer	Marc Kvensakul
Editor and Communications	Tatiana Soares da Costa
Education Rep	Nirma Samarawickrema
Secretary for Sust. Members	Sally Jay
FAOBMB Representative	Terry Piva

Representatives for:

ACT	Christina Spry
NSW	Laura Sharpe
Qld	Michael Landsberg
SA	Melissa Pitman
Tas	Iman Azimi
Vic	Laura Osellame
WA	<b>Alyssa Van Druemel</b> (Monika Mucha retired)

## 8. ASBMB Awards 2021.

Congratulations were given to society award winners:

Lemberg Medal:	Merlin Crossley
Shimadzu Research Medal:	Erinna Lee
Eppendorf Edman Award:	Lahiru Gangoda
SDR Scientific Education Award:	Lois Balmer
ASBMB Boomerang Award:	Anton Calabrese
ASBMB Fellowships Awards:	Pamali Fonseka, Edward Kerr, Abi Ghifari and Belal Shohayeb

Members were encouraged to apply for 2021 awards with nominations open. Female members were specifically encouraged to nominate for an award.

**9. Any other business.**

None were raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42.



..... JACQUI MATTHEWS (President)



..... DOMINIC NG (Secretary)