

**Minutes of the Australian Health Economists' Society
Annual General Meeting
5.30pm, 29 September 2005
Hyatt Hotel, Auckland**

(Subject to ratification at 2006 AGM)

The President of the Society, Dr Jim Butler, declared the meeting open at 5.30pm.

Present: Jim Butler, Brian Harrison, Lisa Gold, Mike Shields, Glenn Jones, Elizabeth Savage, Richard Milne, Denzil Fiebig, Jane Hall, Henry Cutler, Bernard van den Berg, Marion Haas, Alexandra Sidorenko, Rhema Vaithianathan, Philip Clarke, James Harris, Ian McRae, Marian Shanahan, Stephen Jan, Luke Connelly, Rosalie Viney, Tony Harris, Bruce Hollingsworth

Apologies: Kees van Gool, Jenny Watts, Tony Scott.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was moved by Jane Hall and seconded by Philip Clarke that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted. The motion was carried.

President's Report

The President reported on the continued sound position of the society since the previous meeting. At September 2005 there were 62 financial members of the society and more membership applications are in process, for an estimated total of 80 members. Of the 62 current members, 11 took up the opportunity of 3-year membership and 2 of 5-year membership.

The society remains in a very sound financial position, with a solid bank balance, marginally greater than at the same time last year. Credit card facilities continue to be popular for membership and conference registrations.

The 2005 conference had 60 registrants prior to the conference and 65 by the first day of the conference. There were 3 invited keynote speakers and 47 contributed papers, with 45 discussants due to sterling effort on the part of Rhema and of invited discussants.

The AHES website has completed its move to the new website, with thanks to Lisa Gold. The members section of the website is especially useful and will demonstrate the benefit of financial membership of the society.

The newsletter has been re-instated and is being issued at the rate of three issues per year. All members are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter to keep it alive.

Last year AHES put forward a list of six names for PBAC. The Minister replied to say that Rosalie Viney has been appointed and it was good to see a name from the AHES list selected.

The President expressed special thanks to:

- The 2005 sponsors – Pfizer Australia and GlaxoSmithKline – who have kindly sponsored the keynote presentations at the 2005 AHES conference
- The AHES Executive, Mike, Lisa and Brett.

- Denis Davis, the Society's public officer, who has worked away quietly for the last few years and has indicated he no longer wishes to continue in this position.
- The committee: Jenny Watts, Rhema Vaithianathan and Brian Harrison.
- Rhema in particular for her organization of the 2005 conference

The votes of thanks were supported by acclamation.

Jane Hall proposed that it was very appropriate for the meeting to pass a motion thanking Jim Butler for the development of the society under his leadership, for the increased financial stability of the society and for the increased appearance of international speakers. The motion was passed by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the treasurer, Brian Harrison tabled the 2004/05 financial report and spoke to the 2005 Treasurer's report.

At the end of the last financial year the bank balance stood at \$47,776; this has now increased to around \$60,000, with a predicted end of financial year balance of around \$59,000.

It was moved by Jim Butler and seconded by Rosalie Viney that the meeting pass a vote of thanks to Brett Rogers, who has helped keep the financial affairs in order for the last year. The motion was carried.

Election of Office-Bearers

Nominations for candidates for election as officer-bearers of the Society were called for in the second issue of the 2005 newsletter. By the due date of 22nd September 2005, the following nominations had been received by the Secretary:

- President: Denzil Fiebig; Tony Scott
- Vice-President: Michael Shields
- Secretary: Lisa Gold
- Treasurer: Jenny Watts
- Public Officer:
- General Committee: Brian Harrison

As there were two nominations for President, a secret ballot was conducted. Denzil Fiebig spoke on his own behalf and Mike Shields spoke to Tony Scott. On completion of the ballot, Denzil Fiebig was elected President. According to the rules of the Society, the other positions are declared elected.

Denzil Fiebig noted that he was happy for Jim Butler to continue to chair the rest of the meeting.

This left one vacant post for Public Officer and two vacant posts on the General Committee. Nominations were called for these positions at the AGM. The following nominations were received:

- Public Officer: Elizabeth Savage. Nominated by Mike Shields, seconded by Lisa Gold
- General Committee: Rosalie Viney. Nominated by Brian Harrison, seconded by Jane Hall. Rhema Vaithianathan. Nominated by Lisa Gold, seconded by Brian Harrison.

According to the rules of the Society, these positions are declared elected.

Conference Abstracts for 2004 and beyond

Following discussion at the 2004 AGM, the Executive looked into options for publication of the AHES conference abstracts for 2004 and beyond. The only interest attained was from the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Health Policy, and this journal required a subsidy for publication of abstracts. The Executive felt this was not a worthwhile investment for the society and decided instead to have conference abstracts available on the publicly accessible part of the AHES website for a period of one year.

Jane Hall agreed that this was a sensible decision, especially given that not all institutions have access to BioMed Central journals.

Conference 2006

Jim Butler noted that the vice president was traditionally in charge of program management for the annual AHES conference. A tentative expression of interest had been forwarded by Sandra Hopkins to host the AHES Conference 2006 in Perth, thus allowing the conference to be held back-to-back with the AES conference 2006.

Elizabeth Savage moved that the location of the 2006 Conference be Perth, seconded by Jane Hall. The motion was carried.

AHES Travel Scholarships

Mike Shields reported that 4 submissions were made for the 2005 AHES Travel Scholarships and one scholarship was awarded to Linping Xing. For this year, the Executive opted to offer the scholarship as a travel scholarship, i.e. reimbursement of airfare, payment of 3 nights accommodation at the conference hotel, conference registration and conference dinner. This format is open to change and views of the membership were sought.

Elizabeth Savage argued that the award should be labeled as a prize as this would look better on a recipient's CV. Jane Hall added that it could be offered as a prize of no fixed level, i.e. that the prize is a travel scholarship to the annual conference. Luke Connelly wondered whether the label "prize" added a level of difficulty for the Executive in implying some level of peer review and selection. Rosalie Viney suggested that it be called an award rather than a prize. Denzil Fiebig informed the meeting that the Econometrics Society offer a differential award, related to where people are traveling from in which recipients receive a conference fee waiver and a sliding scale "prize". Philip Clarke proposed that the number of awards offered be left in the hands of the Executive.

Tony Harris proposed that the Society reimburse up to \$1500 for travel and accommodation expenses related to attendance at the annual AHES conference, seconded by Denzil Fiebig. The motion was carried.

Jim Butler queried whether Philip Clarke had an upper level in mind for the number of awards offered. Philip Clarke replied that he did not. Rosalie Viney proposed up to two awards be offered.

Philip Clarke moved that the Society offer up to two scholarships, seconded by Jane Hall. The motion was carried.

Contribution to the Alan Williams Health Economics Fellowship

Sadly, Alan Williams passed away earlier this year. Lisa Gold noted that a Fellowship had been established at the University of York.

Lisa Gold moved that the Society donate \$500 to the Alan Williams Health Economics Fellowship, seconded by Tony Harris. The motion was carried.

Any Other Business

Philip Clarke commented on the growing length of some papers presented at the annual conference. He noted that in the UK, the papers for HESG meetings are restricted to 20 pages, which encourages people to get their papers edited down to a publishable length. An alternative option would be to have papers of maximum 25 pages plus an appendix that can be available separately.

Marian Shanahan argued that it is up to the reviewer to determine whether or not a paper is too long. Bruce Hollingsworth argued that a more important issue was timing of when full conference papers were submitted (with too few papers available by the agreed deadline dates).

Philip Clarke moved that AHES limit conference papers to 25 pages, seconded by Tony Harris.

Richard Milne argued that the motion be modified in that the limit should apply to word length rather than number of pages. Jim Butler agreed that a word length of 7,000 words be imposed on papers presented at the AHES conference. Rosalie Viney suggested that the word length restriction should be discretionary. Denzil Fiebig argued that the Executive should be allowed to refuse papers that exceed the set limits. Richard Milne suggested a recommended word limit of 5,000 words plus figures and tables.

Brian Harrison moved that a recommended length limit of 7,000 words plus tables and figures be imposed on papers to be presented at the annual AHES conference, seconded by Marian Shanahan. Denzil Fiebig proposed the modification that the Executive has the right to reject papers that exceed these limits. The motion was carried.

The President declared the meeting closed at 6.30pm.