

**Minutes of the Australian Health Economics Society
Annual General Meeting
6pm, 1 October 2008
NATIONAL WINE CENTRE, ADELAIDE**

(Subject to ratification at 2009 AGM)

The President of the Society, Denzil Fiebig, declared the meeting open at 6pm.

Present: Jenny Watts, Denzil Fiebig, Lisa Gold, Mike Shields, Peter Sivey, Jane Hall, Henry Cutler, Leonie Segal, Francesco Paolucci, Son Nghiem, Rosalie Viney, Kees van Gool, Ruth Williams, Sue Gargett

Apologies: Bronwyn Croxson

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

President's Report

The President noted that the Society was moving along quite smoothly and thanked the AHES Executive Committee for their continued investment. We continue to put out at least two – and usually three - issues of the AHES electronic Newsletter each year. We are disseminating information more, including via the electronic mailing list.

Nominations for PBAC were again called for via AHES this year and the resultant submissions were passed on to PBAC for consideration. The decision is pending.

The annual conference is the main activity of the Society. The President thanked the organizing committee of Leonie Segal, Kim Dalziel and Liz Westwood for all their efforts this year. There was no Pfizer sponsorship of the conference this year – a change from recent years. This followed a movement of key personnel but it also timely given the discussion later in this agenda on sponsorship.

The votes of thanks were supported by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report

Jenny Watts tabled the 2007/08 financial report and presented the 2008 Treasurer's report (see Appendix C).

Over the last financial year our balance rose slightly from \$49,000 to \$51,000. The current balance (at end of September 2008) stood at a healthy looking \$66,000.

The conference costs to the Society for 2008 will be higher than in recent years due to the lack of sponsorship and also the lack of co-support for keynote speakers from an Australian University. In the future we may want to co-sponsor keynote speakers with a local University, although the disadvantage of this approach is that it does restrict the choice of keynote speaker.

The 2008 conference had 95 registrants over the two days of the conference. This is a similar level of attendance to last year, although the number of abstracts submitted was far higher.

Membership of the Society stands at around 120, a stable level for the last few years. As in recent years, the conference attendance comprised roughly half existing members of the Society and half non-members.

Election of Office-Bearers

Nominations for candidates for election as officer-bearers of the Society were called for in the second issue of the 2008 newsletter. By the due date of 25th September 2008, the following nominations had been received by the Secretary:

- President: Denzil Fiebig
- Vice-President: Michael Shields
- Secretary: Lisa Gold
- Treasurer: Jenny Watts
- General Committee: Bronwyn Croxson

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

The following nomination was received by the Secretary after the due date:

- Public Officer: Henry Cutler

Further nominations were called for this position at the AGM but none were received. According to the rules of the Society, this position was declared elected.

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

- General Committee: Peter Sivey. Nominated by Mike Shields, seconded by Lisa Gold.
- General Committee: Kees van Gool. Nominated by Jenny Watts, seconded by Mike Shields.

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

AHES Travel Scholarships

Mike Shields reported that two submissions were made for the 2008 AHES Travel Scholarships. The submitted papers were independently rated by three of the four members of the AHES Executive (one member was excluded due to conflict of interest) and two scholarships were awarded. Scholarships were awarded to reimburse up to \$1500 for travel and accommodation expenses related to attending the 2008 conference.

There was some discussion of options to increase the number of submissions in 2009 and beyond. Kees van Gool suggested circulating the advertisement to the Social Policy Network. The scholarships should also be advertised at the July 2009 iHEA world congress. Mike Shields suggested that we could increase the amount of each scholarship to attract more applicants.

AHES Prizes 2008

Denzil Fiebig announced that the junior researcher prize for 2008 would be selected from the four papers presented in a special session today. The winner would be announced at the conference dinner later tonight. There were four submissions for this prize, with the prize judged by the two keynote speakers.

The AHES Executive presented a series of discussion points concerning the second prize raised at the last AGM: the AHES research prize (see attached). These points were discussed and wording was changed from the draft conditions presented in the discussion points (Appendix A).

The motion was put that the AHES Research Prize be awarded in 2009:

- To recognize a significant research contribution in Australasian health economics
- As a biennial award
- Of \$500 plus a certificate
- Relating to a publication appearing in a refereed journal in the previous two years
- To researchers who at the time of the nominated publication were undertaking their research in Australia or New Zealand, irrespective of their nationality. Possible affiliations include Universities, research organizations, government departments or private companies in Australia or New Zealand
- In the case of joint authored work, the majority of authors (50% or more) must satisfy these criteria
- Anyone may nominate for the prize. In addition, the awarding Panel may nominate persons they feel should be included
- The awarding Panel will be made up of the President of AHES (or nominee) plus two further AHES members nominated by the AHES Executive and one internationally recognized health economist who is not a member of the AHES.

Proposed: Rosalie Viney. Seconded: Kees van Gool. The motion was passed.

Conference 2009 and process for deciding future conference locations

The AHES Executive wants to bring forward the thinking and planning of AHES conferences.

Jane Hall noted that she could only recall one occasion where the conference location was the subject of disagreement, in other words conference location seems to be an issue that the AHES membership are not really bothered about. The current official or unofficial policy of

moving the conference venue around the country seems fine, as would the alternative of holding the conference at Canberra in order to build the AHES membership within the Australian government workforce.

The motion was put that AHES adopt a new policy on the process of deciding on AHES conference locations. The new policy is that the AHES Executive will ask for Expressions of Interest in hosting an AHES conference six months prior to the AHES conference of the preceding year (for example, expressions of interest for hosting the 2010 conference will be called for six months prior to the 2009 conference). This is a proposal for a new policy which gives the Executive the power to choose the location of future conferences from among the submitted expressions of interest. Proposed: Denzil Fiebig. Seconded: Lisa Gold. The motion was carried.

Denzil Fiebig announced that the proposed venue for the AHES 2009 conference is Hobart. The local Economics Department is willing to act as local conference organizers and the AHES Executive is keen to use this new venue as an opportunity to build membership.

The motion of AHES 2009 to be held in Hobart was passed by acclamation.

AHES draft policy on conference sponsorship and conflicts of interest

The draft policy was presented at the AGM. The first issue to arise was that of prior distribution.

The motion was put that, in future, all proposals will be circulated at least two weeks prior to the AGM. Proposed: Jane Hall. Seconded: Lisa Gold. The motion was carried.

Jane Hall queried whether sponsors would be able to sponsor individual sessions under the new policy. Denzil Fiebig argued that the wording of the draft means that sponsors cannot determine content or topic of sessions, but does not prevent sponsorship of an individual session. Rosalie Viney requested that the wording of the draft be changed to ensure that in future the policy is enacted as intended.

The motion was put that the draft policy be amended under section 1 as follows: "AHES welcomes sponsorship from public and private sources. Sponsors may elect to sponsor the conference in general, or one or more keynote speakers. The sponsor may not suggest, select or otherwise place restrictions on the information presented and/or presenters included in any session of the AHES conference. In return for sponsorship, all sponsors will be publicly acknowledged at the conference and in conference materials. Sponsors will also be entitled to a number of complimentary full conference registrations (the number of places offered will be linked to the size of the sponsorship)." Proposed: Lisa Gold. Seconded: Rosalie Viney. The motion was carried.

The president expressed thanks to the AHES General Committee - Bronwyn Croxson, David Rowell and Leonie Segal - for their efforts in developing this AHES policy.

The President declared the meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Appendix A: AHES RESEARCH PRIZE

An award promoting excellence in research in Australasian health economics

What are the objectives of the award?

- To recognize a significant research contribution in Australasian health economics

Issue 1: Should the award relate to Australian or Australasian (Australia and New Zealand) health economics? This relates to a bigger issue of whether the A in AHES should be Australian or Australasian. It is currently the former and all of our publicity just refers to Australia but de facto we operate as the latter. For comparison there is an Australian Economic Society but an Australasian Econometric Society and a Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand.

What is the basis on which the award will be given?

- Nominations for the award will be considered every two years.
- Nominations will relate to a particular publication that appeared in a refereed journal in the preceding two years.

Issue 2: Should the award be annual?

Issue 3: How do we treat material available online before “publication”?

Issue 4: Do we broaden the scope of what is a publication?

Who is eligible?

- Researchers who at the time of the nominated publication were undertaking their research in Australia or New Zealand irrespective of their nationality. Possible affiliations include Universities, research organisations, government departments or private companies in Australia or New Zealand.
- In the case of joint authored work, all authors must satisfy these criteria.

Issue 5: Should we further restrict it to financial member of AHES?

Issue 6: Instead should we restrict it to citizens of Australia or New Zealand irrespective of their place of residence?

Issue 7: Should we only allow sole authored papers?

Who can nominate?

- Anyone may nominate person(s) for the prize. In addition, the awarding Panel may nominate persons they feel should be included.

Who assesses the nominations?

- A Panel made up of the President of AHES (or nominee) plus two further members nominated by the AHES Executive and drawn from those people who have given keynote addresses at past AHES meetings.

Issue 8: Clearly there are many other options. For example: three people nominated by the AHES Executive of which at least one should be an AHES member and at least one an internationally recognized health economist who is not a member of AHES Executive.

The prize?

- \$500 and a certificate.

Appendix B

Background note on proposed policy on sponsorship and conflicts of interest

There have been discussions about sponsorship at previous AHES AGMs. Members queried the role and nature of sponsorship. The 2007 AGM therefore asked the committee to draft a policy on sponsorship and conflicts of interest, for consideration at the 2008 AGM. (Appendix B2 summarises these discussions.) A draft proposal is attached as Appendix B1.

The policy on sponsorship we are proposing is less precise than iHEA's, reflecting both the reduced transaction costs of monitoring behaviour using informal institutional arrangements within Australia/NZ (as opposed to an international organisation), and the lower likelihood of abuse given the smaller financial sums involved. In particular, iHEA's policy on sponsorship precludes sponsorship of peer-reviewed conference sessions: we don't consider this is necessary in an AHES context. Appendix 3 presents relevant parts of iHEA's policy on sponsorship.

Appendix B1 Proposed AHES policy on sponsorship and conflicts of interest

1. Sponsorship of AHES conference

AHES welcomes sponsorship from public and private sources. Sponsors may elect to sponsor one or more keynote speakers and/or one or more conference sessions. There are no requirements on AHES linked to this sponsorship. In particular, the sponsor may not select or otherwise place restrictions on the information presented and/or presenters included in any session of the AHES conference. In return for sponsorship, all sponsors will be publicly acknowledged at the conference and in conference materials. Sponsors will also be entitled to a number of complimentary full conference registrations (the number of places offered will be linked to the size of the sponsorship).

2. Conflicts of interest

AHES requires *complete* disclosure of all relevant financial relationships and potential financial conflicts of interest, regardless of amount or value. All presenters at an AHES conference must declare any conflicts of interest that apply to any author on the work they are presenting.

AHES follows the JAMA definition of conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest may exist when an author (or the author's institution or employer) has financial or personal relationships or affiliations that could influence (or bias) the author's decisions, work, or manuscript.

Authors must provide information about all relevant financial interests and relationships or financial conflicts within the past 5 years and for the foreseeable future (eg, employment/affiliation, grants or funding, consultancies, honoraria, stock ownership or options, expert testimony, royalties, or patents filed, received, or pending), particularly those present at the time the research was conducted and through publication, as well as other financial interests that represent potential future financial gain.

AHES requires that:

- All authors are required to disclose all potential conflicts of interest.
- All such disclosures must be listed in an Acknowledgment section.
- Authors should err on the side of full disclosure.
- Authors without conflicts of interest should include a statement to that effect.
- If in doubt authors should contact the AHES executive for clarification.

If an author's disclosure of potential conflicts of interest is determined to be inaccurate or incomplete after publication, a correction will be added to the archived paper (stored on the AHES website) to rectify the original disclosure statement.

Funding/Support and Role of Sponsor. All financial and material support for the research and the work should be clearly and completely identified in an Acknowledgment section of the paper. The specific role of the funding organization or sponsor in each of the following should be specified:

- Design and conduct of the study.
- Collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of the data.
- Preparation, review, or approval of the manuscript.

Example statements for inclusion are:

“The author(s) has(have) no conflicts of interest, including specific financial interests and relationships and affiliations relevant to the subject matter or materials discussed in the paper.”

“The author(s) acknowledge the following potential conflicts of interest: AA has been reimbursed by Shangri La Products, the manufacturer of elysium, for attending several conferences; BB has been paid by Shangri La Products for running educational programmes and has her research registrar paid for by the company; CC has shares in the company.” (adapted from BMJ competing interests example)

Appendix B2: Summary of discussions at previous AHES AGMs

2001, 2002, 2004 & 2005: no discussion on sponsorship recorded

2003: Medicines Australia provided sponsorship for the 25th Anniversary conference

A member asked whether sponsorship was a "one-off" due to the occasion (25th Anniversary conference) or whether sponsorship from pharmaceutical companies would continue. The Executive noted that much effort had been made to attain sponsorship from government sources at State and federal levels. Commonwealth funding had been provided in previous years under the proviso that it approved the international speakers receiving sponsor funds. In contrast, the sponsor companies had been approached under a clear "no strings attached" agreement.

The President responded that AHES will accept sponsorship but prefers not to allow sponsors to determine who speaks at the conference. However, it is acceptable for a company that sponsors a session to be publicly acknowledged and thanked (as with Blackwell Publishing for a session at the 2003 conference).

2006: Pfizer Australia provided sponsorship for the 28th AHES conference

A member called for clarification of the role of Pfizer Australia in sponsoring the conference, given the move in medical circles to recognise the role of drug companies and to avoid association with such companies. The President clarified that Pfizer Australia wish to continue their sponsorship of the AHES conference. There are no requirements on AHES linked to this sponsorship. AHES offered several conference places to the sponsors and Pfizer took up two places for the 2006 conference.

The AGM was reminded that the society has debated the issue of conference sponsorship in previous years and agreed that as long as sponsorship is not tied to conditions then sponsorship from private business (including pharmaceutical industry) is acceptable.

Jane Hall added that iHEA has also agonized over this issue. The basic problem is that sponsorship is needed in order to fund good international speakers at a conference. However, sponsorship needs to be under conditions of no influence over what is presented and who is invited.

Janet Dzor added that it would be a good idea for all presenters to declare conflicts of interest.

The President agreed that it would be good for AHES to have a policy on sponsorship and conflicts of interest. Lisa Gold agreed to bring both iHEA and past AHES debates to the next AGM.

2007: The Secretary noted that the final item arising from the 2006 AGM yet to be addressed was the need for AHES to have a policy on sponsorship and on conflicts of interest. Documents from iHEA and from leading medical journals had been compiled alongside notes on previous discussions on these topics at earlier AHES AGMs. Jane Hall pointed out that the policy was to cover not just conference sponsorship.

The motion was put that the AHES General Committee members turn the collated documents into a policy for AHES on sponsorship and conflicts of interest, to be presented to the 2008 AGM. Proposed: Lisa Gold
Seconded: Jane Hall. Votes for: 17 Votes against: 0. The motion was carried.

Appendix B3: iHEA Policy on Fundraising and Sponsorship (extracts)

Funds have been provided by a variety of Academic Publishers, NGOs, Consultancies, Pharmaceutical Firms, Information Technology Firms and Universities. The statement below spells out the official policy on funding and sponsorship adopted by the iHEA board.

iHEA Policy #2: Memorandum on Funding and Sponsorship

iHEA is an academic society supported by its membership. It welcomes organizational members whose sponsorship helps to disseminate research, support development of new initiatives and extend activities to less developed countries. iHEA recognizes that all sponsoring organizations (government ministries, NGOs and corporations) have interests. iHEA protects its academic integrity by requiring transparency in all financial support, by relying primarily on membership for core funding, and by having a diversified pool of sponsors so that no single interest has undue importance. For conference sponsorship, iHEA welcomes contributions in support of the meeting, which will be given appropriate acknowledgment in the conference programs and posters. Scientific sessions are run exclusively by Association under the standards of academic peer-review and are not sponsored by any outside organization. Social events, workshops and other elements (e.g., bags, books, etc.) may be sponsored at the discretion of the conference organizing committee. Attendance at the conference is the financial responsibility of the individual, and of course will make use of a variety of funding sources. iHEA willingly invites organization to sponsor attendance at the meeting by subsidizing registration, travel and housing costs, particularly for students and researchers from the developing world. iHEA adheres to the principles on conflict of interest promulgated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and will adopt a modified form of their “uniform principles” for all peer-reviewed submissions (ICMJE uniform principles are currently under revision: see J. Am. Med. Assoc. 286(10):1232-1234, September 12, 2001). All contributors to scientific sessions will be obliged to declare sources of support and potential conflicts of interest as a regular part of the abstract submission process for both organized and contributed sessions. Finally, iHEA supports academic integrity by inviting all members and interested outsiders to view its financial statements, which are made publicly available at www.healthconomics.org.

iHEA accepts general conference sponsorship. Peer-reviewed scientific sessions are never sponsored (although attendees may have their travel and registration costs covered by a sponsor). Sponsorship of Scholarships for students and delegates from developing countries is actively encouraged. Sponsorship of breakfasts, workshops, etc. is usually allowed, and in some cases the HOC may, in consultation with iHEA conference administration, allow sponsorship of specific items (social events, bags, etc.)

1. Exhibits and Print Program Advertisements
iHEA makes available tables and booth space for organizational members, sponsors and, with approval, some vendors. Print advertisements in the Conference Program are solicited. Pricing of these items is available from the iHEA Secretariat. All funds obtained from exhibits and print program advertisements are added to general conference funding.
2. Promotion and Publications
Since the membership constitutes the core attendees of the iHEA conference, all of the activities that build the association and enhance its reputation are, in a sense, promotion. Continuity and strong linkages to journals, research units, publishers and academic agencies are important to delegates. Thus print brochures, posters, emailings, etc., are more in the nature of reminders and general association building rather than traditional “promotion.” Collections of papers from the iHEA conference may appear as special issues of journals, and occasionally as monographs or edited conference volumes. The iHEA Secretariat works with the HOC to develop a consistent print and promotion plan. The HOC may also desire to create a conference volume, journal issue, etc., for which it will take the lead, while coordinating with the iHEA Secretariat.

Appendix C: AHES Treasurer Report 2007-2008 FY

		TOTALS
Opening Bank Balance (1/07/2007)		\$ 48,994.95
Adjustment 30/06/07		\$ 7,902.00
Revenue		
Interest	\$ 454.01	
Membership 2007/08	\$ 6,155.00	
2007 Conference	\$ 27,265.00	
Sponsorship (Pfizer)	\$ 13,200.00	
Other	\$ 2,174.36	
Revenue Adjustment	\$ 4,461.40	
Total Revenue		\$ 53,709.77
Expenditure		
2007 Conference Total	\$ 49,829.46	
- Venue	\$19,834.70	
- Dinner	\$ 5,440.00	
- Other	\$ 2,588.43	
- Speakers	\$21,966.33	
2007 Scholarships X2	\$ 2,433.95	
2008 Conference Deposit	\$ 1,000.00	
Internet Hosting 2008	\$ 328.00	
Merchant Service Fee	\$ 919.25	
Other Fees & Charges	\$ 24.75	
Total Expenses		-\$ 54,535.41
GST paid		-\$ 4,902.00
Closing Bank Balance (30/06/2008)		\$ 51,169.31
Closing Bank Balance (29/09/2008)		\$ 66,319.39