

**Minutes of the Australian Health Economics Society  
Annual General Meeting  
6pm, 1 October 2009  
THE OLD WOOLSTORE APARTMENT HOTEL, HOBART**

**(Subject to ratification at 2010 AGM)**

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

**Present:** Jenny Watts, Denzil Fiebig, Lisa Gold, Mike Shields, Brian Harrison, Wang Sheng Lee, David Johnston, Stefanie Schurer, Peter Sivey, Terence Cheng, Tony Scott, Gisselle Gallego, Henry Cutler, Marian Shanahan, Anthony Harris, Grace Lordan, Glenn Jones, Elizabeth Savage, Beverley Essue, Tracey Laba, Jane Hall, Peter Davey, Steve Birch, Bruce Hollingsworth, Alison Hayes, Vu Van Chinh, Sarah Bales, Phil Haywood, Rachael Morton, Julie Ratcliffe

**Apologies:** Rosalie Viney, Marion Haas, Philip Clarke, Steve Jan

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was moved by Glenn Jones and seconded by Gisselle Gallego 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 smoothly and was in a sound financial position. The AHES Executive continues to meet regularly throughout the year via teleconference and deal with issues as they arise through these discussions. The Executive has continued to meet expectations in delivering at least three issues of the AHES electronic Newsletter each year.

This year AHES has renewed conference sponsorship from Pfizer. This sponsorship is for one year (2009) with no guarantee of renewal. The President thanked Pfizer for their support.

The President thanked Hugh Sibly for providing local assistance for the 2009 AHE conference in Hobart. One reason for bringing the conference to Hobart was to build up local interest in health economics and AHES, although only two local registrations were achieved so the Executive have not been so successful in this attempt.

The President thanked the AHES Executive for their continued input.

The votes of thanks were supported by acclamation.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Jenny Watts tabled the 2008/09 financial report and presented the 2009 Treasurer's report (see Appendix A).

The conference costs to the Society for 2008 were high compared to revenue raised, as predicted in the 2008 Treasurer's Report. This was due to a combination of lack of sponsorship (either corporate sponsorship for the conference overall or co-support for keynote speakers from an Australian University) and relatively high conference costs of the chosen venue. The result was that the Society dug into financial reserves substantially to cover the shortfall on the 2008 conference costs.

The shortfall on 2008 conference funding in turn led the AHES Executive to raise conference fees for 2009. This has led to increased conference revenue for 2009. The renewed sponsorship appeared after fees had been set and has further boosted the conference balance for 2009. See Appendix B for predicted revenue and expenditure for the 2009 conference.

Rachael Morton asked for the breakdown of 2009 conference registration figures between first-time attendees and others. Although the Executive did not have this information, the Treasurer reported that the conference is attracting an increasing pool of student registrations.

Bruce Hollingsworth asked whether conference sponsorship was necessary for the AHES conference. The Treasurer replied that it was, especially given the experience of last year.

## **Election of Office-Bearers**

Nominations for candidates for election as officer-bearers of the Society were called for in the second issue of the 2009 newsletter. By the due date of 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008, the following nominations had been received by the Secretary:

- President: Denzil Fiebig
- Vice-President: Michael Shields
- Secretary: Lisa Gold
- Treasurer: Jenny Watts
- Public Officer: Henry Cutler

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

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

- General Committee: Marian Shanahan. Nominated by Denzil Fiebig, seconded by Lisa Gold.
- General Committee: Peter Sivey. Nominated by Mike Shields, seconded by Denzil Fiebig.
- General Committee: Grace Lordan. Nominated by Elizabeth Savage, seconded by Tony Harris.

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

## **AHES Travel Scholarships**

Mike Shields reported that a number of submissions were made for the 2009 AHES Travel Scholarships. Two scholarships were awarded: to Mark Dodd of the University of Adelaide and to Gang Chen of Monash University. The President noted that the increased number of submissions this year was encouraging and was evidence that the scholarships were becoming highly competitive.

Congratulations to the scholarship recipients were supported by acclamation.

## **AHES Prizes 2008**

Denzil Fiebig noted that the junior researcher prize, awarded for the first time in 2008, would again be selected from the submitted papers presented at the 2009 AHES conference. As in 2008, the prize was being judged by the two keynote conference speakers.

According to the rules set down at the 2008 AGM, the AHES Research Prize would be awarded for the first time in 2009. The judging panel for this prize includes Ali McGuire as the international health economist, Jim Butler as the esteemed local health economist and AHES member, the President and the Vice President as the final nominated AHES member.

The AHES Executive expressed concern over the small number of papers that had been proposed for this prize in 2009 and called for discussion over how to improve the process for the next prize (due in 2011). In particular, the President proposed that we choose to:

- (a) Continue with the process as followed this year; or
- (b) Change the process such that all eligible papers in Health Economics and the Journal of Health Economics are automatically nominated for the AHES Research Prize. For the 2007-08 period this would have resulted in around 20 papers being automatically nominated. If this number of papers were nominated, the AHES representatives on the judging panel would shortlist papers and provide a shortlist to the international and national judges for final selection.

Jane Hall clarified that the essential choice here was that either there should be an automatic 'funnel' through which papers would be nominated or the process should remain one of nomination (by peers or self). One issue was that there are more journals relevant to health economics than just Health Economics and the Journal of Health Economics. However, perhaps the low number of nominations this year was simply due to a learning process and that nominations would increase over time.

Gisselle Gallego agreed that there will be increased awareness of this prize over time. Jane Hall noted that AHES members vary in their ability and tendency to self-promote. Elizabeth Savage argued that this was a good reason for automatic nomination.

Bruce Hollingsworth queried the process for dealing with multiple nominations from a single author. Jane Hall proposed that authors could be asked to nominate their best paper.

Mike Shields suggested that organisation Directors could nominate from their staff, but this suggested was not supported by many in the audience on equity grounds, that many health economists do not work in organised health economics units.

Bruce Hollingsworth proposed the motion that the AGM address a two-step choice:

- (a) Do we want an automatic process or not; and
- (b) Which journals will be included in an automatic process

Lisa Gold seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

The President then put the motion that an automatic process be added to the AHES Research Prize nomination process. Mike Shields seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a count of votes.

Brian Harrison started the discussion on the list of journals to be included in the now-added automatic nomination process. Jane Hall noted that there will always be an increasing number of relevant journals, but if the decision were to be made on Journal Impact Factor then the obvious candidates were Health Economics, the Journal of Health Economics, and Social Science and Medicine. Others called for the addition of Value in Health, but there was debate in the audience over whether Value in Health was seen as a health economics journal. Stefanie Schurer agreed with Gisselle's earlier view that although the number of nominations had been low this year, now that the issue had been widely debated at this AGM awareness had already increased and nominations would be higher next time around.

Marian Shanahan proposed that the list of journals be restricted to Health Economics and the Journal of Health Economics for the next prize cycle (2009-2010) and that the process be reviewed at the 2011 AGM. Elizabeth Savage seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

### **Conference 2010 and beyond**

The President reported on the process of deciding on AHES conference locations as agreed at the 2008 AGM. The call for expressions of interest resulted in competitive proposals from Sydney (Health Economics Collaboration) and Melbourne (Monash Centre for Health Economics). Based purely on time since the conference was last held there, the AHES Executive chose Sydney as the 2010 AHES conference location.

Marian Shanahan welcomed the AGM to Sydney 2010. The Health Economics Collaboration included members from NDARC at UNSW, the University of Sydney, Three Rivers and the George Institute. Marian welcomed feedback from all AHES members on where exactly members would like the conference to be held.

Denzil Fiebig noted that according to the process laid down last year, the Executive should call for expressions of interest for the 2011 venue. However, he noted that Monash had already expressed interest in hosting the 2011 conference and given the competitive nature of their existing bid he felt that it may be a waste of everyone's time to go through the official process of calling for expressions of interest more broadly.

Denzil Fiebig proposed the motion that the 2011 AHES conference be held in Melbourne. Elizabeth Savage seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

### **AHES and iHEA**

Jane Hall reported on three major iHEA-related issues that had arisen since the last AGM:

- (1) The **2013 iHEA conference in Sydney**. The 2013 iHEA conference will be held in Sydney, provided we (AHES – as joint hosts with CHERE) are happy to proceed. Jane stressed that iHEA would bear the financial risk associated with the conference. The 2011 iHEA conference will be held in Toronto. At Sydney, we have placed a hold on the Sydney Convention Centre (Darling Harbour) for the dates of 8-11 July 2013. There is little to do at the moment apart from to think about a theme for the 2013 iHEA conference. There were no questions or comments on the 2013 iHEA

conference. Any members with queries or comments are asked to contact Jane Hall. Jenny Watts noted that the visual impact of Barcelona and Beijing was important and that we would need to engage with professional marketers to ensure Sydney 2013 had similarly impressive visual marketing. Jane Hall noted that we (AHES/CHERE) are currently working with the (renamed) Sydney Visitors Bureau on this issue.

- (2) On a related topic, there has been discussion at iHEA around the proposal to move to an **annual iHEA conference**. It is important to note that at this point no decision has been made: the current decision of the iHEA Board is that no decision has been made but that there will be a survey of members to collect information on what the iHEA membership want on this issue. Some Board members want to change to an annual conference, others argue that this would change both the conference attendance and the conference style and would prefer to stick to the biennial conference. The survey of iHEA members will be due in October/November and it is important that AHES members that are also members of iHEA make their views known at this time. It was noted in the audience that some iHEA Board members seem to be acting contrary to the position presented by Jane Hall; Jane clarified that no official decision has been made to move to an annual iHEA conference at this time and that all iHEA members would have the opportunity to comment via the forthcoming survey. Lisa Gold noted that AHES would ensure that one issue of the AHES electronic newsletter coincides with the survey timeframe to remind and encourage all joint AHES-iHEA members to participate in the iHEA survey; Jane Hall agreed to provide a summary of arguments for and against the proposal for this future AHES newsletter issue.
- (3) The final relevant iHEA issue concerned **iHEA governance**. In the past the iHEA governance structure has not been very proactive but this is now changing and one decision that has been made at iHEA is to move to a larger Board with a smaller Executive that will oversee the key iHEA workers. The proposal is that Board members will be elected for a four-year term, to ensure that they can attend two face-to-face meetings (coinciding with the current biennial conference). The most relevant part of these discussions for AHES is the proposed change in Board composition. At present elections to the iHEA Board are something of a popularity contest, with over-representation from North America and the UK and no guarantee that those elected are the best Board contributors. The new proposal is to have 12 iHEA Board members, of whom four members will have automatic positions (i.e. the President-Elect, etc.), four will be elected by the iHEA membership (as previously), and four will be elected by regional groups (as currently proposed, by HESG (UK), ASHE (USA), AHES, and the (non-UK) European groups). The proposed timeline is to have this new Board structure in place by 2011.

Denzil Fiebig noted that the decision for AHES today was to get a feel for whether AHES was interested in this potential iHEA Board role. Brian Harrison moved that the AHES Executive follow up on this proposal as a task for the General Committee members. This motion was seconded by Glenn Jones. The motion was passed.

### **Support for other Australian/New Zealand health economics activities**

Denzil Fiebig informed the AHES membership that one of the issues that had arisen over the last year was a request for sponsorship of the inaugural Australasian Health Econometrics Workshop, to be held in Melbourne in April 2010. The AHES Executive had agreed to support this additional health economics activity with financial and in-kind sponsorship; on

the condition that this support would be targeted to research students and that there was no guarantee of repeated support for future activities.

The President made clear that the AHES Executive was open to approaches from other AHES members for similar support of other health economics activities. He noted that similar strings were likely to be placed on all AHES offers of support (that is, a focus on developing young researchers).

### **AHES membership fees**

The Treasurer noted that, following the renewal of conference sponsorship attained in 2009, there was no need to consider an increase in AHES membership fees for 2010. However, until recently this had looked like a necessary option.

### **Any other business**

Bruce Hollingsworth raised the issue of conference sponsorship from a pharmaceutical company. Denzil Fiebig noted that this issue had been extensively discussed in recent years, resulting in the AHES policy on sponsorship and conflicts of interest (see Appendix to 2008 AGM minutes). Given the lack of further comments and the pressing time, this discussion did not continue.

The President declared the meeting closed at 7.20pm.

## APPENDIX A

			<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Opening Bank Balance (1/07/2008)</b>			<b>\$ 51,169.31</b>
<b>Revenue</b>			
Interest		\$ 173.11	
Membership 2008/09 (N=100)		\$ 6,080.00	
2008 Conference		\$ 32,580.00	
Sponsorship		\$ 2,200.00	
Revenue Adjustment		-\$ 267.49	
<b>Total Revenue</b>			<b>\$ 40,765.62</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
2008 Conference Total		\$ 49,002.83	
- Venue	\$ 19,918.03		
- Dinner	\$ 7,184.20		
- Other	\$ 1,788.60		
- Speakers	\$ 20,112.00		
2007 Conference			
- Speaker	\$ 8,265.24	\$ 8,265.24	
2008 Scholarships X2 +Jr research prize	\$ 2,366.65	\$ 2,366.65	
2009 Conference Deposit	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,250.00	
Internet Hosting 2009	\$ 312.00	\$ 312.00	
Bank Fees and Charges	\$ 1,346.78	\$ 1,346.78	
AMEX/Diners	\$ 106.10	\$ 106.10	
CBA Merchant adj	\$ 1,690.00	\$ 1,690.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>-\$ 64,339.60</b>
GST paid	\$ 721.00		<b>-\$ 721.00</b>
<b>Closing Bank Balance (30/06/2009)</b>			<b>\$ 26,874.33</b>
<b>Closing Bank Balance (29/09/2009)</b>			<b>\$ 70,666.23</b>

**APPENDIX B**

Conference Budget					
	2008		2009		
	N	\$	N	\$	
<b>Income</b>					
Registrations (incl dinner)	93	\$ 32,580.00	106	\$ 42,550.00	**
Sponsorship		\$ 2,200.00		\$ 13,200.00	
Dinner	73		85		
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 34,780.00</b>		<b>\$ 55,750.00</b>	
<b>Costs</b>					
Venue		\$ 20,918.03		\$ 15,224.00	**
Dinner		\$ 6,530.00		\$ 7,735.00	**
Bus				\$ 425.00	
Exec Dinner		\$ 654.20		\$ 604.50	
Accommodation		\$ 400.00			
Guests		\$ 19,712.00		\$ 14,000.00	**
Bags		\$ 1,788.60		\$ 1,990.45	
Scholarships X2		\$ 1,866.65		\$ 3,000.00	**
Jr Researcher Prize		\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00	
Best Paper				\$ 500.00	
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>\$ 52,369.48</b>		<b>\$ 43,978.95</b>	**
<b>BALANCE</b>		<b>-\$ 17,589.48</b>		<b>\$ 11,771.05</b>	
** Estimated					