

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## MINUTES

Date: Sunday 13th December 2009<sup>1</sup>  
Time: 12 noon  
Address: 1/6 Pilley St, East St Kilda

### 1 FORMAL MATTERS

Election of a chair for the meeting.

Motion: That Ian Robinson be chair for the meeting.

m: Meredith Doig, s: Kevin Childs. Carried without dissent.

Present: Ian Robinson, Glenn Faulkner, Debbie Connelly, Bob Traill, Meredith Doig, Lillian Van Den Molen, Bodye Darvill, Kevin Childs, Maureen Cooper, Diane Preston, Ian Paroissien, Lyn Allison, Cathie McDonald, Leonard Buller, Barbara McKenzie, David McKenzie, Ian Cunliffe, Frank Jung.

Apologies: Vivienne Glance, David Freeman, Ralph Catts, Halina Robinson, Robert Traill, Valerie Bourke, George Venturini, David Higginbotham, Ken Wright, Rex Williams, Nigel Sinnot, Jason Ball.

Proxies: none.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM

The Minutes of the previous AGM, held at 291 Dandenong Rd, WINDSOR, at 6.30pm on Thursday 30th April 2009, had been circulated and were also available for those present.

Motion: That the minutes be accepted as a true record.

m: Ian Paroissien s: Kevin Childs. Carried without dissent.

### 3 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None raised.

### 4 REPORTS

#### (a) President's Report

President Ian Robinson reported that the Committee had been working on three major projects, each arising from the Rationalist Society's stated aims:

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1. Note: the last AGM was only 6 months ago, but that was late. From this AGM onwards, the Committee intends to hold its AGMs within 5 months of the end of the financial year, as per the constitution.

## **1 Supporting a high quality, universal and secular education system**

Action has been taken on seeking to revert to a truly secular education curriculum; opposing extension of the Chaplaincy Program; opposing Steiner education in government schools; and supporting the Humanist Society of Victoria in their development of a primary school ethics curriculum.

## **2 Supporting an open and secular democracy**

The Society made submissions on tax privileges of churches; lobbied against prayers before Parliament; and is revisiting the Republic debate.

## **3 Supporting the codification of human rights**

The Society made a submission to the Federal Government's review of human rights; and monitored the worrying actions of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) in the UN Human Rights Council seeking to 'outlaw' defamation of religion.

For 2010, the Committee will continue actions on project 1 and 2 but scale down project 3. A new project will be added, focusing on supporting the role of Science in public policy.

The President thanked Cathie McDonald for her efforts in overseeing the development of the new Rationalist Society website; mentioned the Society's support for Committee member Jason Ball going to the US to be part of a youth panel at the Center for Inquiry conference; mentioned that 2009 marks the 100th year of the Rationalist movement in Australia and thanked Bodye Darvill for her efforts in pulling together a new *History of Rationalism* that will come out early next year; alerted members to the RSA on Online Opinion and a new RSA facebook page and in a forthcoming *A Companion to Philosophy in Australia*.

Events: the President noted the Society had again organised a lunch at Melbourne University during Science Week, in conjunction with the Secular Society there. Last year the Society hosted Michael Shermer; this year it was Lawrence Krauss. The Society also joined with the Humanist Society and the Secular Party to present a panel session at the recent Parliament of World's Religions, an event that attracted over 100 attendees, many more than the average for the other sessions at the convention. The President will represent the Society as a speaker at the forthcoming Global Atheist Conference in March 2010.

Finally, the President noted with sadness the passing of Sonja Delander, a committed and active committee member of the Rationalist Society and board member of the Rationalist Association since the 1940s.

### **(b) Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

The Secretary/Treasurer reported there are 262 single members, 115 single concession members, 20 couples members, 6 concession couples members, making a total of 403 members. Membership seems to vary between 400 and 500, with some members not renewing and new members joining.

The constitution of the Society allows for up to 12 Committee members; there are currently 9, so there are 3 vacancies. The Secretary urged anyone with an interest in becoming more active in the Society's activities to consider joining the committee.

The new website will reduce the administrative workload significantly, with membership applications and renewals being done automatically online for those who have email addresses.

Archival files have now been picked up from Lois Sweet's place and placed in storage until a working party can sort through them.

Journal: Unfortunately the impact of the Global Financial Crisis during 2008/09 had a very bad effect on dividends coming from the Rationalist Association's investments and the Society had to take the decision to publish issue 83 of the journal (Winter 2009) online only. With the economy picking up, the Society will revert to printing the journal in hard copy from issue 84 (Summer 2009/10). The Committee reviewed the costs of printing and publishing the journal by seeking competitive quotes; while digital printing is marginally cheaper, the Committee decided to stick with Currency Communications because of the 'value add' of their long experience with the journal.

The Secretary/Treasurer tabled a [financial report](#) that showed a surplus of \$7,408 since the last AGM:

- Income           \$17,988
- Expenditure   \$10,580

Motion: That the Officers' Reports be adopted. m: David McKenzie s: Bodye Darvill. Carried without dissent.

## **5 MOTIONS**

None.

## **6 ELECTION OF A COMMITTEE**

Nominations had been received from Ian Robinson for President, David McKenzie for Vice President, Meredith Doig for Secretary/Treasurer, and Jason Ball, Lyn Allison, Diane Preston, Catherine McDonald, Bodye Darvill, and Kevin Childs for the Committee. There being fewer nominations than vacancies, the Chair declared all duly elected.

## **7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **8 CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 1pm.