

Wise Response Society Inc. (WR)
Minutes of Annual General Meeting; 4 August 2016
Landcare Research, 764 Cumberland St, Dunedin

Present:

Alan Mark (AM), Dugald MacTavish (DM), Pat Scott (PS), Alistair Sime (AS), Philip Temple (PT), Pat Mark (PM), Mark Jackson (MJ), Barbara Anderson (BA), Lynn Dowsett (LD), Bob Lloyd (BL), Nikki Harre via Skype (NH), Nathan Surendran via Skype (NS), Jule Barth (JB)

Arrived later: Jocelyn Harris (JH), Lisa Ellis (LE), Janet Stephenson (JS)

Introductions: All present stated name, interests and connection with the Society.

Apologies: Received from Rob Lawson (RL), Liz Slooten (LS), Jim Simpson (JS), Russell Tregonning, Yvonne Curtis, Gerry Te Kapa Coates, John Peet, Ralph Sims, Donna Watson, Emma Neale, Gilbert van Reenen and Peter McDonald; Lisa Ellis and Janet Stephenson for lateness.

AM: moved apologies be received, DM seconded, carried.

The following documents had been pre-circulated:

1. *Chair's Annual Report.*
2. *Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts.*
3. *Auditor's Report.*

Minutes of the previous meeting:

AM read the minutes of the previous Meeting and noted that attendance then was slightly greater, and that this year. As an incorporated society we need to provide an audited report. AM also thanked Landcare for the use of their facilities.

MJ moved minutes be accepted, BL seconded, carried.

Correspondence:

DM noted that it was not practical to table all correspondence because of the sheer volume, mainly by email but two matters would be best addressed later under general business.

AM agreed and stated that Te Ao Turoa will be addressed under General Business also.

Chairperson's report on the business of the Society:

AM ran through the titles on the 15-page Annual Report and key points.

AM moved the report be accepted, PT seconded and commented on thoroughness.

PS agreed with PT and suggested sharing in some way as summary of activities of the Society over the past year. MJ noted that the annual report was already on the website, but that he could put a second post to make it more prominent. Discussion occurred as to how widely the pre-circulated material had been distributed to supporters and it was established that DM had sent an email to approx. 250 Dunedin members with a link to it on website. Consensus reached that this was sufficient.

AM: motion to accept the report carried.

Treasurer's report on the Society's finances and the Statement of Accounts:

Rob Lawson overseas so AM presented on his behalf.

Noted that these are the accounts up to 31st March, so do not include activity from the past four months. Lean in terms of cash at that time, but no great expenses.

Noted that it is not on report because took place after 31.3, but Southland Fish and Game donated \$5,000 in payment for AM's appearance at an Environment Court hearing.

AM outlined that the financial statement and treasurers report were audited by Neil Gaudin BCom on 19th July. Added that the statement of accounts is only the one page attached. as incorporated society but that a slightly longer statement of accounts was available at the back of the room if anyone wanted it.

On behalf of RL, AM moved for adoption of financial statement, treasurer's report, and audit attached, seconded by DM, carried.

Election of committee members:

DM outlined that all current committee members are happy to continue, except Emma Neale. Lewis Verduyn has not engaged at all since previous AGM. Lewis lives in Wanaka, whereas the Society aims for most committee members to be Dunedin-based in order to make attendance at meetings more practical. DM noted that Jocelyn Harris was happy to remain on, but also happy to step aside if another member was selected that meant the limit of 14 committee members was reached.

PT stated that he was happy to remain on the committee. He would be more available after the end of this year, and added that he was working on an anthology of political poetry with Emma Neale that he would like to use as a springboard for a range of issues.

DM asked whether anyone present would like to put forward a nomination. No nominations were made. DM then asked JB if she would be willing to be on the committee, and she accepted.

Committee members:

DM read list of committee members and moved they be accepted as the Wise Response Society Committee, AM seconded, carried.

Mark Jackson, Rob Lawson, Bob Lloyd, Dugald MacTavish, Alan Mark, Janet Stephenson, Nathan Surendran, John Cocks, Philip Temple, Liz Slooten, Brian Turner, Pat Scott, Jim Simpson and Donna Watson. Jule Barth also agreed to be on the committee (and will be seconded).

Election of Offices:

PS suggested that as the election of offices would take place from the pool of committee members, it would require as many of those as possible to be present, and could therefore perhaps take place in the next committee meeting.

DM checked rules to ensure that this was allowed and confirmed.

Agreed that election of offices would take place at next committee meeting.

Fixing the annual subscription/donations (if any) for the ensuing year:

AM passed on note from RL who recommended not to start an annual subscription, and LD agreed, suggesting that it would be better to just have donations.

PT asked whether the Society is registered as a charitable trust.

PS suggested enquiring about becoming eligible for charitable status because would allow those who did donate to get their taxes on donations back.

PS moved that WR apply to register as a charity.

(summarized from what was garnered amongst technological issues with sound quality over skype) NS asked how much extra work that would be for committee, and pointed out that the primary challenge would be whether we can come up with broad charitable objectives so as not to fall foul of charities commission.

AM clarified that registering as a charity may therefore limit WR's activities.

PS withdrew her previous motion and moved that committee look into possibility of becoming charity. PT seconded. Carried.

PS added that Fish & Game provided that substantial sum (referring to the \$5,000 payment to AM), so suggested there may be other organisations who may be happy to donate, who are not members, so could we advertise more widely to encourage that? AM suggested expecting donations from members is reasonable, but perhaps not from external organisations.

DM raised that RL asks us to discuss how WR can be put in a more financially viable position, perhaps a task for the committee? No further discussion.

Confirming Patron:

AM stated that the current patron of the Society is Sir Geoffrey Palmer, and that he is thoroughly valuable in that position, providing information and advice to the Society when needed. There has been some question as to his affiliation with Labour party, perhaps not ideal, because Wise Response strives to be apolitical but AM did not think it should impact his ability to contribute to the Society.

AM asked whether we add another patron but his view was that another is unnecessary, considering what Sir Geoffrey is able and willing to contribute. DM asked whether it is common to have several patrons?

AM stated that Forest and Bird has only one - the Governor-General - but also outlined his involvement as co-patron for an organisation, suggesting that there is precedence for having two or even more.

Jocelyn Harris (JH) arrived. 3.52pm

DM thought if we had more than one patron we would want them to be complementary, as a patron can be important in giving credibility in different areas.

AM pointed out that Sir Geoffrey Palmer values us as an organisation and brings us into his confidence, e.g. sends draft papers/publications for comment. We couldn't do better than Sir Geoffrey, and he fulfills our requirements. Other persons suggested for consideration were

Jeanette Fitzimons Fiona Kidman, Lorde, Sir Stephen Tyndall, Gareth Morgan Janet Stephenson, Marjan van den Belt and Eleanor Catton.

LD reminded us that the new Governor General is a woman, and that it might be worth finding out more about her.

Lisa Ellis arrived (Approx 4pm)

AM suggested that people contact DM or himself with more suggestions of people, although the rules state that we have to select one at an AGM so will have to consider people to recommend at the next AGM.

Changing the bank account name:

AM explained that the bank account was originally established as 'National Risk Appeal', so we need a statement to take to Kiwi Bank and change name of account. The process is just a formality, need a minimum of 3 signatories.

MJ moved that, when the Treasurer Rob Lawson returns, we change name of the Kiwi Bank account from National Risk Appeal (Account number: 3890.4.0100230.00.50) to Wise Response Society Inc. PT seconded. Carried.

Janet Stephenson (JS) arrived 4.05pm

General Business:

Review of current WR initiatives

- Recent suggestion from George Preddey that we're not focused enough on action
 - o DM elaborated and said this item was to invite discussion on WR activities. GP was critical that there was too much talk not enough action and have had similar remarks from others. AM raised GP's recent report to Parliament - a 'compendium' of climate change knowledge and issues and said he could pass on a copy of that report/statement if anyone wanted it.
 - o NS read out GP's summary from email thread (sound quality issues over skype meant no one in Dunedin could understand). Then summarized that what GP seems to be worried about is that time is running out and he is getting frustrated. DM's feeling was that there is a certain amount of paperwork involved in getting the action, and that we can be a part of that. E.g. of the Royal Society initiatives. Change doesn't necessarily involve pitchforks.
 - o JH: We need to work to strengths, and strengths are standing in the community and connections. If critiquing lack of action we need suggestions for what action would look like.
- Loomio ENGO consensus position: JB updated all on what has been agreed so far
 - o NS clarifies that the ideas is also to try and get across that we're very much about education, so alongside discussion around the table building consensus about bottom lines and potential responses, it's also an attempt to get the WR message understood more broadly – Skype cut out.
 - o PT picked up that idea and suggested that we have become increasingly focused on climate change and that there are other elements that we aren't paying much attention to. Seem to be sucked in to particular movement and need to think about that.

- DM mentioned that there was some discussion on this at the Wellington Workshop. Balance is that you don't spread yourself so thin that you can't be effective, Potentially, can focus on CC, pull that 2 deg. string, so that it ends up addressing other risks that are part of WR appeal. May not cover everything but will cover a whole lot. Not try to cover everything, but will cover a whole lot.
- JS felt that climate issues and related implications for the economy are a core issue that runs through everything so if addressing one, need to, and inevitably will be addressing all. Suggested changing the nature of the conversation to something that posits an alternative future. Can we use something like 'renewable economy' as a positive phrase that people can grab onto? An economic system that is based on renewable and renewability of resources, allows thought of growth but forces it to be conceptualised in a different way. What does growth look like in a renewable system?
- JS then provided a few updates around the climate forum (being facilitated by Adrian Macey of Vict. Univ.):
 - There have been two meetings (Ack. & Wgtn.), about 30 at the Wellington one which she attended, very wide representation of key businesses too (carbon traders, petroleum, landcorp, federated farmers, etc.)
 - Discussion was about Climate Forum, and there was no question in that context as to need for zero-carbon economy. Everyone present agreed that some kind of forum across business, government, community, and local government was needed.
 - Since then, Adrian Macey has met with CC Minister Bennett, who seems to be on board and also wants to see a government directed work programme on climate change.
 - Noted that engagement with public important and perhaps a Climate Change Forum could be a part of that, although there is currently no funding and therefore little movement.
 - MfE are working on "a plan for a plan" (on how to mitigate NZ's GHG emissions).
 - Strong interest in multi-stakeholder forum, politically acceptable (it is supported by the two main opposition parties), needs legitimacy, and will need funding.
- NS requested input from BL (who excused himself at approx. 4.30pm), JS commented that we are missing resource depletion aspects, because there is no choice but to change drastically.
- JH emphasized that we need to keep Labour and Greens in loop so they can include in their election agenda etc, PT agreed that we need to keep political parties involved.
- PS enquired as to how many people are involved in the Loomio exercise and how to get more.
 - JB can send weekly summary emails
 - PS suggested drawing attention to the fact that this is not disparate views, this is not sacrificing, it's exploring. Important that all parties at Wgtn meeting agreed on objective of zero carbon economy. DM made point that LAWF participants agreed at first too but lost sight of collective goals due to perceived threats to immediate business activity.

- AM noted that we have lost some of the 18 groups who attended the WR Workshop in Wellington.
 - DM suggested clarifying to potential participants that the Loomio exercise is not binding on any group at this stage; it's just about discussion. Group reps develop something, then they can go back to respective groups and get rubber stamp or comment: so it's an iterative process.
- NH made apologies for needing to excuse herself but some quick comments first: There's a lot of work that needs to be done in preparing and holding spaces ready for things like a change of government so may be difficult to get real traction because we are not in right political environment currently – current discussions can be useful for establishing strong voices for when the political situation is more conducive to action and change. Added a personal comment that she strives to stay away from economic based arguments because they can essentially be co-opted, but instead says it doesn't matter what it costs, because it has to be done.
 - DM asked how her sustainability group at Auckland Univ. has been working and evolving.
 - NH explained that UoA has been slow in developing structures so NH is trying to develop a network similar to how WR works, network of experts. Potential is there.

PT excused himself at approx. 4.50

- Local body candidates and public meeting with Sustainable Dunedin City (*Action point)
 - DM explained that Sustainable Dunedin City are organizing a candidates meeting and have invited us to contribute/support and that includes encouraging people here to stand. So DM encouraged those present to think of people who might be good local body candidates.
 - MJ clarified that it is just the candidates for mayor now as there are too many candidates to cater to, so candidates will respond in writing.
 - JH asked if Forest and Bird were involved, as they had been in the past and MJ confirmed.
- Compact of Mayors:
 - DM noted the Compact of Mayors invites local bodies to develop a program to deal with climate change, and that Dunedin, Wellington and Auckland have already signed up. Suggested that WR might want to be involved in that process in some capacity. (*Action point).
- Responses from Ministers to communications from Alan regarding climate change action.
 - AM notes that Paula Bennett responded to JH, bottom line still seems to be that any transition must 'still support growth'.
 - James Renwick, JH and AM have received responses with similar sentiment.
 - DM suggests that we might be able to help there in reframing the term 'growth' as 'renewable growth' (following suggestions by JS, above).
 - AM discussed the recently released Conservation and Environment Science Roadmap discussion paper, which is also still dealing with issues based on the assumption that science will provide solutions to the many current problems

while growth continues. Noted that a public meeting on that report would be held in Dunedin on 16th Aug. (1-3pm in the Museum's Hutton Theatre), should be an opportunity for us to challenge these discourses.

- PS asked why JS wants to move from 'sustainable' to 'renewable'
- JS replied that she wasn't suggesting one should replace the other. The point was that the word 'growth' is very powerful in the dominant paradigm, but assumes endless resources and sinks. Introducing the idea of renewable growth might change the conversation in a way that is not completely oppositional, to asking what an economy based on renewable growth might look like - a metaphor being that forests continue to grow but are renewable, i.e. parts of the system are changing and being replaced at a speed and scale that the system can cope with.
- LE agreed and pointed out that it would not need to be the dramatic 'zero growth', but would indicate a transition to a renewable, sustainable growth. Noted the importance of speaking in positive terms.
- Te Ao Tūroa Environmental program of the DCC call for applications to participate.
 - AM read out the call/requirements for participants and noted that applications closed on 5th August (the following day). Threw open for comments.
 - AM suggested JS as person to apply, but she declined as is sufficiently busy and has been on another DCC committee for the last three years.
 - LD noted that 4 meetings a year was not a huge commitment.
 - AM enquired whether Save the Otago Peninsula had put in for a member and LD noted that they had discussed it but she was unsure what the outcome was.
 - Discussion over whether JB is able/keen – she agreed to have a look, AM said WR would endorse if she applied.
- AM asked whether anyone had any additional comments, NS specifically.
 - NS had no additional comments except an agreement that it was important to keep in mind the broader WR aims and goals.
 - DM replied that just because we're currently focusing on developing the climate change initiative in Loomio, that doesn't preclude addressing other risks. The one purpose of the Society in the Rules is to get acknowledgment of limits, so plenty of room to move there.

AM call for other items.

Declare meeting closed at 5.05pm