

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIS INC.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Held Saturday 8th October 2016, 2pm
in the meeting room at Level B1, 257 Collins Street Melbourne.

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Opening: The President David Down opened the meeting at 2pm and welcomed those present.

Attendance: David Down, Eleanor Pugsley, Vicki Montgomery, Stephen Hawke, Lorna Elms, Claire Johnson, Peter Johnstone, Clive Luckman, John Blackwood, David Andreasson, Barbara Beaumont, Steve Boyd, Malcolm Carkeek, Bruce Cleave, Ann Dixon, James Duff, Chris Elmore, Alan Fincher, Barbara Francis, Peter Gill, Judith Gulliver, Yvonne Izatt, Maureen Kent, Margaret Ledley, Lesley McDiarmid, Penny Mercer, Susan Minetti, Jenny Murray, Anne-Maree Richardson, Wilbur Vigus, Penny Wolf

Apologies: Tony Arthur, Erna Cameron, Cecil Clarke, Jenny Redman, Robert Gribben, Alison Boundy, Janne Bonnett, Margot Beattie, Rod Armstrong, Lea Beranek, Margaret Glen, Christine Skinner, Arthur Wallington, Frances Wallington, Janet Davis, Eric Smith, Margaret Smith, Martin Playne.

2. Minutes of the Previous AGM

2.1 **Accuracy:** It was moved by David Down and seconded by Peter Johnston that the minutes of the previous AGM held 10 October 2015, be confirmed. **Carried**

2.2 **Matters arising** from the minutes: Nil

3. Council Report

The annual council report has been posted on the members' area of the GSV website and additional hard copies have been made available at this meeting. David Down reiterated key aspects:

- This is our 75th year but we are busy trying to ensure we survive into the future
- There has been a 40% decrease in membership over the past 10 years. Similar membership declines are seen in overseas societies and local family history groups as well as non-family history groups.
- We have an ability to attract members at eg seniors month events, but we have difficulties keeping members. We're continuing to review our operating costs and when Alison Carter left we decided not to replace her. So bookshop and administration will remain closed for the time being until we find competent volunteers for Saturdays in reception.
- Eleanor has successfully managed a large team of volunteers without whom we wouldn't survive
- Our new website and membership system was launched in the last few months enabling online membership and event bookings in addition to a stable web site. A few problems with the membership system are still being worked on.
- Our bookshop operations have been dramatically reduced while we've changed focus with many of our education events to increase our *one on one* activities such as the successful research workshops and library research days.
- There is still strong membership of the Special Interest Groups and we are grateful to those groups. Members seem keen on Discussion Groups at the moment eg SWERD and it's hoped that perhaps some others will be started
- Retiring councillors were thanked: Alison Boundy, Cecil Clarke and Eleanor Pugsley plus previous president John Blackwood and Allan Aberdeen.

On behalf of the society David thanked the staff, volunteers and Council for their work over the past year. David invited questions and comments about the report.

It was moved by Lorna Elms and seconded by Claire Johnson that the Annual Report be adopted.

Carried

4. Financial Report

The Treasurer Stephen Hawke presented the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 which are available on the members' area of the GSV website and additional hard copies have been made available at this meeting. Stephen highlighted former President John Blackwood's work in reducing costs resulting in a decreased loss from \$70,000 last year to a \$23,000 loss this year. He particularly remarked on Education and Research having increased their revenue.

Anne Dixon questioned how many members were required to breakeven. Stephen explained that it was around the current level. In response to a further question, Stephen explained that our rent outlay increases by 5% each year in accordance with our lease agreement which terminates in November 2018. Michael Rumpff further questioned the increase in rent not being a market value increase but Stephen pointed out that despite the recent building works our rent increase was an agreed percentage at the market rate at the time the lease option was renewed in 2011. A number of people commented on the cleanliness issues of lifts and the building entry due to the building works. Barbara Beaumont questioned whether we had staff provisions, which Stephen confirmed were appropriate (see note 8 of the financial statements). Stephen reported that we have received advice from State Trustees of a \$2,000 bequest from the Estate of Peter Ryan, a long time library volunteer.

It was moved by Stephen Hawke and seconded by Clive Luckman that the Audited Financial Report be adopted **Carried**

5. Appointment of Auditor

It was moved by Stephen Hawke and seconded by Peter Johnston that Lanyon Partners be appointed as auditors for the financial year ended 30 June 2017.

6. Election of Office Bearers and Councillors

David Down passed the chair to the Vice-President and appointed Returning Officer, Eleanor Pugsley. Eleanor advised that in accordance with the Rules, at least half of the 16 Council positions were now vacant. In addition due to the resignation mid-term of one Councillor (Alison Boundy) there were vacancies from the previous AGM, resulting in 13 positions currently available to be filled. Eleanor read out the names of the 7 nominations received as listed in the AGM Agenda, and declared them duly elected, as the number of vacancies exceeds the number of nominations received. She then called for further nominations from the floor for the remaining 6 positions of Vice-President (two year term), Secretary and 4 Councillors for a term of one year. There were two further nominations from the floor: David Down nominated Penny Wolf seconded by Eleanor Pugsley and David Down nominated Vicki Montgomery for Secretary seconded by Peter Johnston.

The newly elected Councillors were as follows: President, David Down; Secretary, Vicki Montgomery; Treasurer, Stephen Hawke; Councillors (two years), Janne Bonnet, Erna Cameron, Peter Johnston, Jenny Redman, Robert Gribben, and Councillor (one year term) Penny Wolf.

Newly elected President David Down took the chair thanking Eleanor for presiding over the election and for her time as retiring Vice-President and Volunteers Co-ordinator.

7. Society Honours

7.1 Medal of Meritorious Service. David Down announced the award of Medal of Meritorious Service to Bruce Cleave and the citation was read out. David awarded the medal to the acclaim of all present.

7.2 Certificates of Appreciation

David Down announced that the following people were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for their major contribution to the society. Rod Armstrong, Barbara Francis, Margaret Glen, Maureen Kent, Lea Beranek, Stephen Boyd, Susan Minetti, Christine Skinner, Arthur Wallington, Janne Bonnet, Malcolm Carkeek, Lesley McDermid, Janet Davis, Rhonda Hudak and Penny Mercer. Those

recipients in attendance were presented with their certificate to the acclaim of all present. The others will be presented at the end of year Volunteers' function.

8. General Business

- 8.1 David reported that Linda Farrow has been appointed to replace Kim Johnstone who left at the end of September.
- 8.2 David also reported on a meeting yesterday with the building management and reported that the structure of the new stores will be complete by the end of December 2016 although the internal fittings may take considerably longer. The Collins Street entrance to the lifts will be moved to the left and the Flinders Lane walk through will be closed.
- 8.3 David reiterated certain points such as the reviews of our operations that have focussed our attention on the *one on one* sessions such as *library research days* following specific lectures and difficulties experienced by some people in downloading webcasts resulting in under-utilisation of this resource. He also remarked on the revamp of our social media strategy. He highlighted the decline in membership that is severely affecting our ability to continue financially especially as fewer members visit the library noting that we have sufficient resources to continue to the end of the lease but we aren't able to commit to another lease renewal or move to another premises. What to do with our library is difficult. We've commenced discussion with various groups including State and City libraries but none would appear to have the facilities or space to take our collection. The digital collection might still be accessible from home, but part of the point of a society is getting together socially. We've had some early discussions about collaboration with other groups such as RHSV, AIGS and the Cornish Association since they also recognise the need to work together. If we do nothing we would cease to exist. We have only about 1 year to decide on the future so by the time of the next AGM we will need to be working toward a new society.

Michael Carkeek asked about the groups who were bucking the trend and David replied that they were groups with a narrow focus and small membership which have the ability to grow such as an American group which closed its doors to become purely digital. Michael also remarked on the reason for not keeping members: he believes people finish their immediate family history. Claire Johnson encourages new members to attend an orientation session and to join SIGs etc. We're also about to offer half hour individual sessions for new members. Ann Dixon commented on the Ancestry.com advertising not helping with people's expectations or believing that they can do it themselves. David pointed out that we need to make it attractive for people to come in and see the benefits. Michael also suggested that it was a generational trait that people weren't coming out while Claire Johnson pointed out the competition from Public Libraries. Stephen Boyd suggested advertising in libraries and adding a question to the membership renewal form, asking people why they wouldn't renew. David explained what goes into renewal letters and John Blackwood also reported on the last review which sought explanations from people not renewing, finding that there were a wide variety of reasons, not costs, with only a small proportion unhappy with their treatment in the library. Such consultant reviews and surveys can be costly to conduct. Wilbur asked about our promotional activities. David mentioned our AFTC advertisements and having a stand in Federation Square for Seniors' Week last year and that Bill Barlow will be handing out flyers in Collins Street. Building Management have been refused tenant advertising other than while we are standing in front of the building. Michael Rumpff is keen on self promotion and seminars while David mentioned the cost of external presentations and that if we don't stay here we'll still have access to other venues e.g. library lecture theatres. Ann Dixon mentioned local and family history groups meet regularly e.g. Yarra Plenty with Liz Pigeon. Bruce Cleave asked for directions in Ancestor about building access while others suggested it should go on the web and that it's on our Facebook page.

9. Next AGM: David Down advised that the next AGM would be held on Saturday 14th October 2017 at 2pm.

10. Close: David Down thanked all for their attendance and invited them to stay for refreshments. He closed the meeting at 3.15pm