



Annual General Meeting 2024 Minutes (Draft)

Time & Date – 16:30 on the 6th February 2024

Venue – Crowne Plaza Terrigal, Forresters Room. An MS Teams link was emailed to active members through the Wildapricot membership system.

Current Board of Directors - Tamar Greaves (TG, President), Geoff Willmott (GW, Vice-president), Maggie Zhai (MZ, Treasurer), Frank Sainsbury (FS, Equity & Diversity), Michael Higgins (MH, Membership), Marta Krasowska (MK) & Joe Berry (JB, Awards).

Honourary secretary – Andrew Clulow (AJC)

Board Apologies/Absences – Christine Browne (CB, Communications)

Other apologies received – Ian Gentle (remote).

Agenda

- 1) Approval of minutes of the last AGM and matters arising from said minutes (TG, 5 mins)
- 2) President's report & announcement of new board of directors (TG, 5 mins)
- 3) Treasurer's report, update on IACIS2022 finances and approval of treasurer's report (MZ & Vince Craig, 10 mins)
- 4) Communications committee report (CB, 5 mins)
- 5) Membership report (MH, 5 mins)
- 6) Equity & Diversity report (FS, 5 mins)
- 7) Awards committee report (JB, 10 mins)
- 8) ACIS2024 report (Erica Wanless, 5 mins)
- 9) Discussion on upcoming ACSSSC and ACIS2026 (TG, 5 mins)
- 10) Other business
- 11) Next AGM and Close of Meeting (TG)

Meeting opened – 16:30

Approval of minutes of the last AGM and matters arising from said minutes

TG – Welcome to the AGM.

Approval of minutes proposed by Saffron Bryant, seconded by Aaron Elbourne.

President's report & announcement of the new board of directors

TG – Thanked the organisers of the 3MT competition and the organising committee of the ACIS2024 conference, particularly noting the short notice for the latter in organising the meeting. Noted the awards to be announced later in the meeting.

The newly elected directors were announced: Jitendra Mata; Livia Salvati Manni; Saffron Bryant; Nhiem Tran and Stuart Prescott. Thanked other nominees.

Continuing board members are Maggie Zhai, Marta Krasowska, Geoff Willmott.

Andy Clulow is staying on as honorary secretary.

Retiring directors are Tamar Greaves, Michael Higgins, Frank Sainsbury, Christine Browne and Joe Berry.

Explained the board spill process to the membership and encouraged new/remaining directors to consider which roles they would nominate for at the next meeting.

Encouraged members of the society to contribute to available roles listed in the presentation.

Treasurer's report, update on IACIS2022 finances and approval of treasurer's report

MZ – Outlined the cash balance being just over \$134k. Society is doing OK financially but has suffered a small loss in 2023. This largely resulted from membership fee loss due to complementary memberships from IACIS and the 2023 student conference. Bills for the student conference came through in 2023, whilst the registration from said meeting was accounted for in 2022.

Noted the awards supported financially by the society, conference and website management fees.

VC – As treasurer of IACIS2022 meeting updated and corrected the record from the last AGM.

Arinex provided the final budget just before the last AGM, reporting a small profit of \$2k. Upon going through the finances carefully, VC discovered a number of mistakes and in the end a loss of just under \$29k was made. The errors included counting ACIS seed money of \$60k as a donation and not including a \$30k donation from Tourism QLD in the final budget. Considering the differences that the conference faced, this was not the worst outcome that was envisaged, with VC looking at a \$100k loss and potential bankruptcy at one point.

Lessons learned – Plan to make a reasonable profit. Need to budget to make 10-15% of the overall event cost in profit. This provides a buffer against loss and would encourage the society to adopt that approach.

Difficulties with the conference organisers – could not get budget in excel/spreadsheet format and would only deal through one person, who was not VC.

Calum Drummond – Thanked VC for undertaking that role and for his due diligence in searching the finances and correcting the record.

Communications committee report

TG gave update on behalf of CB – Introduced the comms team and the roles being writing and sending out the newsletter, maintaining the society X and LinkedIn accounts. Encouraged students and ECRs to take up these responsibilities as some were becoming vacant.

Membership report

MH (remote) – Outlined the current membership being 402 members, a healthy database and this has been growing well for the past 5 years. Out of that total there are 316 active (paid up) members, the remainder are non-active or pending renewal. Encouraged all members to log in to the website, update their profiles, contact information and keep up to date with any outstanding payments.

The next renewal date for 2024 membership is 1st March this year. Full staff and student memberships available. Complementary memberships from IACIS2022 and ACSSSC2023 will expire this March and all members will have to renew. Encouraged all members to continue to support the society.

Equity and diversity committee report

FS – Thanked the E&D committee and introduced Amalie Moller as a new member of the committee with Zo Shaw stepping down. Aiming for geographic as well as gender diversity in the committee.

Looking around the room we have a diverse society and the statistics from meetings organised by the society back this up. Presented the statistics from ACSSSC2023. The composition of the board has been a relatively stable 50:50 male/female for a number of years and this is the case with the new board just announced.

Thanked the committee for their work and efforts in being more overt and proactive in promoting matters of diversity.

Awards committee report

JB – Announced the award winners for 2024. ACIS best thesis award went to Dr Samuel Cheeseman and Dr Christopher Vega Sanchez. Also the ACIS ECR Lecturer was awarded to Dr David Ju.

Some awards are still under deliberation and will be announced at the next board meeting.

4 nomination for ACIS lectureship and that was great, only 1 application for 2023 best thesis award and this needs to be improved upon. Encouraged supervisors to nominate students in December.

Awarded ongoing Healy-Hunter and ACIS/ECIS prizes, have received a request to reinstate the Brian Vincent travel bursary for ECRs to attend UK colloids.

Have been developing better nomination procedures for AE Alexander and ACIS plenary lectureships.

Thanked award judges.

ACIS2024 report

Erica Wanless (EW) – Thanked everyone for attending the conference. Gave a comparison between this meeting and the ACIS2019 meeting in Hobart chaired by Ray Dagastine, noting the ACIS2021 virtual meeting chaired by Rico Tabor.

The Organising committee chose to run a 3-day meeting rather than 4-day meeting this year, this seems to have worked well but is up for debate. Former PCO Tulips ceased trading during the pandemic, received a couple of competitive quotes for new PCOs. Went with Lieshman and they have been running RACI polymer division conferences for some time. There has been a journey in Lieshman learning about our community and they have delivered a fantastic meeting. We have been lucky in having the same PCO for a long time and the society should bear this in mind when organising the next conference.

Overall the meeting is down ~25 delegates on preceding years. The plan was to make ~\$15k profit but with this loss of delegates this made achieving this difficult. The student/staff ratio is about the same and future organisers should consider making a greater profit from the student members and also potentially considering how the dinner is subsidised.

Thanked the New Zealand community for being stalwart attendees at the meeting. The international numbers of attendees are down and this was attributed to not being able to advertise two years in advance given that the organising committee was only constituted one year ago. The loss of marketing opportunity has had an impact. Gender balance is similar to 2019, gender balance was better for the virtual meeting in 2021.

Has been devilishly difficult to get sponsorship for this meeting, has directly impacted the number of invited keynote speakers with a flow-on effect on attracting international delegates. Including the loss of ~\$15k in sponsorship and the loss of ~25 delegates the meeting is expected to make a small loss. Commended VC on his earlier comments to be considered for future meetings.

Discussion on upcoming ACSSSC and ACIS2026

TG – Announced that the next student conference would be hosted by JB and Ray Dagastine at the University of Melbourne.

Ray Dagastine – If someone who lives in NSW or QLD wants it up North then they are happy to hand it over.

Questioned whether every conference has to make a profit and indicated his and Joe's intention to not make a loss at the student conference. Suggested that there should be an opportunity to reflect on whether the society wants to foot the bill so that the conference can make 10-15% profit. Questioned whether making everyone pay more is the solution. Noted that money has flowed from home institutions to ACIS to support past meetings. Definitely doesn't want to lose money but won't necessarily be trying to make lots of money from ACSSSC in 2025.

TG – ICONN is on next week and due to COVID these meetings are now in sync. Does the society want to run two student conferences in 2025 and 2026 to get out of sync with ICONN?

Ben Boyd – Half the people in the room have been offered 50% reduction in ICONN rego this week by email and they seem to be struggling. Shifting our meeting may not be the best strategy.

Aaron Elbourne – seconded Ben's statement based on his observations of ICONN.

EW – Membership is the key thing, not the conferences making profit. Would not want to wait three years to run the next ACIS given that everyone has been having a great time this week.

Joshua Marlow – Increasing the cost of rego will not encourage more attendance at the conference and there's a question of balance here.

TG – If we raise our rates to match rise in cost of living it will be a cost but we may have to pay it.

George Franks – If we don't increase the cost we decrease the quality.

Gary Bryant – Or have a less expensive venue.

Stuart Prescott – UNSW are charging more than the Grande Plaza Terrigal.

Patrick Hartley – can we do more with sponsorship?

TG called to see if the membership wanted to run the next ACIS in 2026, this was supported by a show of hands. Then asked who wished to run it?

MK (remote) – Offered through MS Teams chat to assist in 2026 or 2027 with ACIS organisation, pending the merger between UniSA and Adelaide Uni.

Aaron Elbourne – the meeting is becoming more and more NSW/VIC centric, we should look towards other states for the next meeting.

Ray Dagastine – for upcoming conference chairs, you're excited about it and how you shape the narrative. The way the plenaries are set up does not give the organisers flexibility to make decisions on these awards. Is there a place for the lead conference organiser to have a say in this?

TG – This may be addressed by the new nominations process that the board has been working on. It does not address the issue of the chair having a say directly.

Stuart Prescott – The current conference committee felt heard by the board on this issue.

TG – The process is currently that anyone can nominate and then in consultation with the org. committee for oversight makes a decision.

VC – There is an issue that the board owns the conference but the organising committee run it. Some decisions should be made by the board, particularly in a financial sense. The directors need to consider the relationship between the board and org. committee. A written agreement should probably be drafted about information flow and what the responsibilities are.

EW – Made sure that MZ was on the org. committee for ACIS2024 so that there was a direct liaison with the board.

Calum Drummond – Australia-Japan colloids meeting was frequently held as a satellite of ACIS, which helped to push up the number of Japanese delegates and thereby the total number of delegates.

George Franks & EW – A bad time for the Japanese in February, they have exams and so they would be unlikely to come.

VC – The next Aus-Japan meeting is in Okinawa in 2026 and this should kick off the series again.

Other business

TG – opened up for other business.

VC – When Wildapricot was set up it was free, now it costs the society \$8k per year. It charges on the number of people in the database. Might save some money by stripping out defunct members.

EW – The society had to go to the next level up in WildApricot system to accommodate IACIS delegates.

Deb Wakeham – MH has been removing no longer active members, we hit the upper level still.

EW – recommended that the member database be spring cleaned by the next membership board member.

MH – In the archived members section there are ~600 “contacts”, could the society reach out to these people and if they don’t re-enrol remove them?

VC – suggested sending a final warning email saying re-enrol or you will be removed from the database.

MH – These contacts could be stored in a spreadsheet before removal.

Ben Boyd – ACIS is not alone having trouble with making profits at conferences, other societies are actively looking at diversifying income and Ben is happy to talk to the board about other alternatives. As an example, CRS has been involved in running virtual symposia for industry on specific hot topics and charge a conference-level fee for log-in rights.

Ray Dagastine – Last year it was suggested that a fellow of ACIS could be an option to create more value for members?

JB – Outlined the proposed fellowship scheme for ACIS (FACIS, elicited much laughter). Outlined the motivation being to reward sustained commitment from members. Reviewed the fellowship schemes of four other societies and highlighted the best practices determined from these societies.

Recommendations were to recognise service and scientific achievement, target junior and senior members, address behaviour and diversity in the process.

Avoiding conflict of interest could be achieved by having a separate fellowship committee, not allowing directors to be nominated, and having at least one nominator from a different employer.

E&D can be achieved by explicit targets.

Opened to the floor for discussion.

Calum Drummond – In ATSE, the fellows are elected by current fellows, foundation fellowship process needs to be considered. Normally you have a nominations committee and their recommendations are ratified by the board. Fellowship committee as described is fine. For foundation members, nominating board members should not be a conflict of interest. Key decision will be whether the current fellows elect the new ones.

JB – How many fellows do we want?

Gary Bryant – Is it a separate membership category like in AIP?

JB – Would have some logistics involved in this but possible.

Russel Crawford – When ACIS was formed many people resigned from RACI and Russel was a fellow of RACI at this time. Foundation board of fellows could be made from former fellows from different (non-ACIS) societies. Might also be conflicts in getting nominators from different employers.

Chiara Neto – When the society was created there was a founding member joining fee that was higher than the standard joining fee. This could be a starting list for consideration for fellows of ACIS? Reasons for such schemes are normally for the prestige of the award and this should be maintained for the society.

VC – Might be an issue with electing foundation members because of the perception that it was paid for.

Ray Dagastine – It might be a good idea to have a nomination fee for the fellows scheme.

TG – Please could the membership provide feedback to the board on all of these issues.

Calum Drummond – Called for a show of hands for whether there was in principle support for a fellowship scheme before moving forward with the design of the scheme further.

By show of hands the fellowship scheme was supported and it will be developed by the board going forward.

Isaac Gresham – Feels like there is an absence of cultural diversity being acknowledged. Called for ideas to address that in the absence personal ideas.

TG – Has been working on this in the background, trying to include students from diverse groups in meetings.

Russel Crawford – Cultural diversity in student cohort is massive now and we should be focusing on this group becoming members of ACIS.

Arlene McDowell – To perhaps add value for student membership and conference fees, offer that there is an upskilling of student by being session co-chairs for students at conferences.

VC – In the early days of ACIS there was a big push to charge more for conferences and less for membership. This was because people would pay for conferences from grants and membership from their personal accounts. Asked who was this good for in the room? By show of hands, this was just over 50% of the members in the room.

Joshua Marlow – Could there be a separate ticket price option to have an additional tag on price to have membership included?

Livia Salvati Manni – For ECRs especially, having membership included in conference registration does make a big difference.

EW – This is much easier to do for the student conference where you are paying direct to WildApricot. That was not possible with ACIS2024 given the short notice for organisation with the new PCO and also a threat that ACIS would have to register for GST.

Calum Drummond – Asked for a round of applause in appreciation for TGs term as president of the society, which TG extended to the retiring board members.

Next AGM and close of meeting

TG – Closed the meeting with no other business raised.

Meeting closed – 17:39