

NEW SOUTH WALES BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 9 December 2015

1. Opening

A quorum of members being present, Chairman of Council Julian Foster took the chair and declared the meeting open at 6.35 pm.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Will Jenner-O'Shea, Cath Whiddon and Bob Sebesfi.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of meeting of 2014 Annual General Meeting

Motion (John McIlrath/Warren Robinson) That the circulated minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 10 December 2014 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of the meeting.

Motion carried.

4. Business arising from the minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

6. Annual Report and Financial Statements

The Annual Report had been circulated. The report included separate statements from the Chairman, Treasurer, Tournament committee and Club Operations committee.

The Chairman spoke on the most significant development of the year, which had been the merger of the Sydney Bridge Centre with the NSWBA club operations. He noted but disagreed with criticisms that had been made by some to the effect that the Association had 'sold out' the club operations. Rather, the Association had done the exact opposite and invested in them.

The Chairman noted that the NSWBA club operations had been in decline for some years. Investigation of the reasons had identified two key problems:

- lack of consistency and flow-through of teaching and supervised sessions
- there was no dedicated resource in charge of club operations (Liz Fanos had responsibilities associated with both club and state operations)

A decision had thus been made to identify the best candidate to take control of the NSWBA club teaching and playing operations and to revitalise club operations. Following a search by a committee of Council it had been agreed that the best way forward was to obtain the services of Will Jenner O'Shea, who it considered to be the leading teacher in Sydney amongst the newer generation of club professionals. This

was the reason for the merger with the Sydney Bridge Centre, run by Will and Vanessa Brown.

The early signs in Council's view are that the arrangements will work well. As outlined in the previous Annual Report, the intention is to combine operations in a single premises, enabling more efficient use of the NSWBA property assets. This will require a move to new premises, as following a report by John McIlrath and John Scudder (probably the two most experienced bridge administrators in NSW) Council accepted the finding that the present premises are not best suited to the future location of bridge in this geographical area.

Considerable discussion ensued following the Chairman's statement. In particular, Cate Whittaker questioned the amount of goodwill paid and the remuneration arrangements for Will Jenner O'Shea. She thought that an extraordinary General Meeting should have been called to consider the issue. The Chairman explained that this had not been done as there was no change involved in members' rights. In relation to remuneration, Will had become an employee of the NSWBA and it was envisaged that profit-sharing arrangements would become part of his remuneration, ensuring that his rewards were tied to the financial outcomes he was instrumental in achieving.

The Treasurer noted that the profit for the year ended 30 September 2015 was \$3 918, compared with a budgeted loss of \$4 000. The loss had been budgeted because of high travel subsidy requirements for State teams, as the Australian National Championships had been held in Fremantle this year. In the previous year Sydney hosted this event. Not only did it make a profit due to the excellent work done by Marcia and John Scudder and others, but no travel subsidies were required.

Motion (Julian Foster/Bruce Neill) *That the report be accepted.*

Motion carried.

7. Election of Council office-bearers

7.1 Chairman

A nomination had been received in respect of Julian Foster. There were no other nominations and he was declared elected.

7.2 Secretary

A nomination had been received in respect of Richard Douglas. There were no other nominations and he was declared elected.

7.3 Treasurer

A nomination had been received in respect of Helena Dawson. There were no other nominations and she was declared elected.

7.4 Five Ordinary Councillors

Six nominations had been received for the five positions.

Following a secret ballot, Sophie Ashton, Warren Lazer, Wing Roberts, John Scudder and Cath Whiddon were declared elected.

Motion (Warren Robinson/Bruce Neill) *That the ballot papers be destroyed.*

Motion carried.

7.5 Four Special Councillors

No nominations had been received in respect of the Metropolitan zone or the Outer Metropolitan zone. In accordance with the constitution, Council has power to appoint a person to each of those positions.

For the Northern zone, one nomination had been received in respect of Bruce Tier and he was declared elected.

For the Southern & Western zone, two nominations had been received. Following a ballot in which clubs in that zone were eligible to vote, Kaye Hart was declared elected.

8. Appointment of Honorary Solicitor

Motion (Julian Foster/John McIlrath) *That Warren Robinson be appointed Honorary Solicitor of the New South Wales Bridge Association.*

Motion carried.

9. Appointment of Auditor

Motion (Helena Dawson/John Scudder) *That CBC Partners be appointed Auditor Auditor of New South Wales Bridge Association Limited for 2015-16.*

Motion carried.

10. General Business

10.1 Monday night attendance

David Beauchamp noted that attendance on Monday nights, in particular by top players, had declined in recent years. He suggested exploring sponsorship opportunities and extending prizes (particular for younger players). The Chairman noted that David had earlier suggested talks before the session by top players and said that it was intended that this suggestion be taken up.

10.2 Premises

Vanessa Brown outlined the steps taken so far to find new premises. Cate Whittaker suggested that members be surveyed as to their preferences.

10.3 State issues vs club issues

John McIlrath did not see a lot of value for affiliated clubs in return for the affiliation fees paid to the NSWBA, particular for clubs in the Sydney Metropolitan area. He believed this view was widely shared within the metropolitan club community. He thought that the NSWBA should investigate why state events are not widely supported by metropolitan clubs. John also expressed regret that the Country Carnival had been discontinued and asked that the incoming Council revisit this decision.

John's view was that transparency of state and club issues in the NSWBA accounts, while a step forward, would not be sufficient. In his view there should be a legal separation of the state and club entities.

The Chairman regretted that separation of club and state issues in the accounts had not occurred this year, having stated last year that it would. He pointed out

that there are grants for which clubs can apply and some travel and other subsidies.

10.4 State assistance for clubs

Charles Klassen expressed the view that one area the NSWBA could help clubs was in training in respect of computer-based scoring systems and calculation of masterpoint awards. The Chairman replied that this had been identified as a key issue and it was hoped it could be addressed in 2016.

10.5 Structural issues

John McIlrath asked that the procedures for clubs wishing to affiliate with the NSWBA be placed on the website. A difficulty for clubs was that there are too few zones, making it difficult for clubs to have any sort of effective voice on the NSWBA.

The Chairman noted that the present number of four zones is a limit imposed by the constitution. The problem had been identified and a detailed review of the constitution was an important priority for 2016.

11. Closure

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.