



2020 Annual General Meeting

MINUTES OF MEETING

7 pm, Wednesday 31 March 2021

The Effective Living Centre, 26 King William Road, Wayville

1. Welcome and Apologies

At 7:05 pm Sandy Boyce welcomed everyone and acknowledged we meet on Kaurna land.

Present:

Catherine Alcock, Brian Arnott, Maureen Arnott, Max Beacom, Julia Beaven, Sandy Boyce, Judith Bunney, Margaret Calder, Leon Driessen, Meredith Edwards, Robyn Elix, Meredith Evans, Anthea Falkenberg, Natalie Fuller, Jill Gallio, John Haren, Margaret Hussin, Mani Jayarainam, Trevor Jones, Jon Jureidini, Molly Jureidini, Eva Kannis-Torry, Chris Keating, John Kenny, Pauline Kenny, Gaby Kinsman, Kirsty Magarey, Rose Milton-Head, Yunus Noori, Angela Norris, Bella Nguyen, Michael O'Donoghue, Julie Redman, Alex Reilly, Peter Shackleford, Agni Shrestha, Jenny Swanbury, Kim Voss, Lesley Walker, Julian Walsh, Gary Wilson, Trish Wilson, Jo Wright, Pat Wright

Apologies:

Margaret Brown, Mary Camilleri, Alida Cowan, Ann Davenport, Terry Davenport, Dharmamodini, Trish Dundon, Beth Flenley, Gabrielle Harkin, Michael Harry, Wendy Heath, Megan Hughes, Jean John, Alison Kimber, Teresa Lynch, Liellie McLaughlin, Kaye Mehta, Kate Pittolo, Catherine Russell

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the November 2019 AGM

Minutes had gone out with the notice of this AGM. As there were no corrections to the minutes, they were accepted by a show of hands.

3. Chairperson's Report and Annual Report

Sandy Boyce had distributed the Chairperson's report. She acknowledged the hard work of the Management Committee and thanked our Coordinator Molly, who does everything with cheer, creativity and thoughtfulness. Sandy acknowledged that Kate Pittolo and Alida Cowan resigned in late 2020, having brought a legal perspective and project help to J4RSA.

In 2020, COVID-19 meant lots of Zoom meetings; COVID and changes to refugees and people seeking asylum were devastating. Many J4RSA members were engaged in lots of hands-on and financial support through Circle of Friends.

We are grateful Michael McGuire wrote two strong articles in *The Advertiser* about refugees.

There are State and Federal elections coming in the next year. J4RSA wrote a Senate submission, arranged for Peter Malinauskas to speak on radio with a volunteer and refugee, Jacqui Lambie received many contacts from members about the bill to ban phones in detention centres, and many people continued the Friday night vigils in Adelaide. Molly maintained frequent contact with other refugee support organisations.

The Chairman's Report was accepted.

4. Treasurer's Report

Chris Keating had distributed the Profit and Loss statement and the Balance Sheet to those present. He thanked Crystal, our volunteer accountant for keeping the books every month and preparing the financial information. An official audit of our finances is not required, but Chris called on past Chairperson John Haren and member Kim Voss to review the organisation's finances. The good news is that the books balance and are accurate.

The Balance Sheet shows that J4RSA has assets of \$35,533 as of June 30th, 2020. Our greatest income is a grant from the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide for our biggest expense, the Coordinator's salary and on-costs. We are grateful for the church's support, which runs out on June 30th; we will seek an extension of the grant. Thus the memberships and donations of members are important if J4RSA is to continue.

As there were no questions, the Treasurer's report was accepted.

5. Management Committee

Members of the Management Committee serve one year terms. Sandy acknowledged and thanked those people who served on the Management Committee in 2019 – 2020.

Attached to the agenda was information on this year's nominees:

Chair	Rev. Sandy Boyce
Treasurer	Chris Keating
Secretary	Gary Wilson

And as members of the Management Committee:

Meredith Evans
Kirsty Magarey
Michael O'Donoghue

The Constitution says there is to be a management committee of 8 to 10 people. As there were less than 10 nominees, and as there were no other nominees, all six nominees were declared duly elected by acclamation. The Management Committee can co-opt people onto the committee at a later date.

Due to COVID, the State Government gave a six-month extension to associations to hold their 2020 AGMs; expect a "regular" AGM in November of this year.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Guest Panel

Meredith Evans provided the introduction, saying a major focus of J4RSA this year is continuing education for refugees and asylum seekers. To attend university, they must pay international student fees, when they have had limited or no incomes. This was an issue for the Refugee Council of Australia last year, but COVID prevented it getting any traction.

Gaby Kinsman was facilitator and said the issue is impacting lots of young people and is an issue that can't be ignored.

Mani Jayarainam said he arrived in 2013 and finished high school in Melbourne. His family received a SHEV visa and moved to Adelaide (considered a regional area). He was able to do a Certificate 3 in Individual Care and get a job in an aged care facility. With that work, he was able to pay the fees to get a Diploma of Nursing and work as an Enrolled Nurse. Mani applied for and was offered a place at university to study for a Bachelor of Nursing, but he could not afford the \$35,000/year international student fees. He was unsuccessful at getting a University of Adelaide scholarship, as they are very limited. He worries for his sister who is finishing Year 12 in 2021. He feels stuck, with no options. He knows of other talented students who have given up and are working in factories.

Meredith Edwards, previously principal at Woodville High, started working with refugee students in about 2014, particularly when 2 of her Vietnamese students were taken into detention. She assisted students in pressuring the government to allow the students to study, focusing on asking questions, rather than criticising the government. High schools can waive fees for those students once they turn 18. Those students have dreams. Flinders University offered no assistance. UniSA used to offer bridging courses into uni, but not for people seeking asylum.

Eva Kannis-Torry is Principal of Thebarton Senior College, offering vocational training certificates to students from 55 languages and 76 cultures. The College has offered free education to 300 to 600 asylum seekers. The government stopped that, so Eva got teachers to volunteer time to teach, and 2 students have gone on to ANU. Seven have gone onto SHEVs, even though they had good ATAR scores. Some had permanent resident status and Centrelink benefits, but no relief from university/HECS fees. 50 students were eligible who arrived before the 2013 immigration changes.

Bella Nguyen arrived at age 14 as an unaccompanied minor, and still doesn't have refugee status 10 years later. Immigration Department originally would not allow Bella to finish Year 12, as she turned 18 during that year, but the school overcame that. She was then on a Bridging Visa, with no Centrelink and no work rights. With an excellent ATAR score, she applied for a scholarship at Adelaide University, but was not eligible as she had gone to live with family friends in Queensland (as she had no income). She was successful the second time she applied and got a job at Adelaide University. She wants to help others and contribute back to Australia by becoming a radiation therapist/radiologist. She has completed one degree, and is working any shift/weekend she can get to pay fees for a second degree.

Alex Reilly has just retired as Professor of Law at Adelaide University, and is Secretary for Circle of Friends Australia. He has been concerned that people on Temporary Protection Visas have no normal

civilian rights; he highlights a system which denies people the chance to contribute is counterproductive. It is no great cost for a university to forego student fee income by providing them a seat at university. He helped get Adelaide University to offer 10 places, then 5 more places in the first 2 years, then 2 every year after that. A difficulty with the scholarships has been that those refugee students who took up offers then had their Centrelink payments stopped. University welfare services and CoF helped them with living expenses. Now the University of Adelaide offers 3 undergraduate and 3 graduate scholarships each year.

Alex said we need to push for more scholarships, starting with statistics on how many refugees want to go to university. With few international students (due to COVID restrictions), there are plenty of places available. He understands that not all scholarships are being taken up. The bigger issue is about basic human rights. The people on TPV's are treated worse than others. The Coalition government has been deliberately cruel; Labor have been quiet about immigration, but have never supported TPV's.

There was a lively **Q&A** session. It was suggested university alumni be approached to put together scholarships, or tell the universities they will make donations IF the university offers scholarships to refugees and asylum seekers.

Many refugee/asylum students who get into uni get really high marks; they need to pass courses to maintain their scholarships. Many find it hard to study while working and without having had sufficient English tuition.

CoF may have created a scholarship in SA – to be followed up.

In relation to trades, Eva said students wanted to be hairdressers, bakers, chefs, and a number became tilers; however, most wanted to go to university. Those wanting apprenticeships in the trades found it difficult if they had a one-year visa, or had visa applications rejected. Employers do not understand visas and are concerned about security of residence for trainees. Alex now writes letters to employers pointing out that many visas do allow people to train or work for years. People on Bridging Visas are very tenuous. RCOA track which universities offer scholarships and how many.

One of the SHEV rules supposedly is that recipients should save \$300,000 over 5 years! There are lots of compliance rules. People are supposed to study or work for 3.5 of the 5 years, before they can apply for a different kind of visa, like a Skills Visa. People wanting another SHEV are competing with visa applicants from all over the world. The government made it hard to comply with all the rules.

Meredith Evans pointed out that the initial 5 year SHEVs finish in 2022. There are also many people now on 6-month visas with no study rights, and there are too many kinds of visas. She thanked Gaby for facilitating the panel and said J4RSA will be advocating for change ahead of the federal election. She asked people present to volunteer to join a Working Group and team to raise awareness of these education issues.

Sandy Boyce said how important it is to hear stories first-hand. She acknowledged the generosity of the Effective Living Centre in supporting our work. She thanked the panel members.

Sandy Boyce thanked everyone for attending and invited them to share drinks and nibbles. Meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

Chairperson

Sandy Boyce

Date 1/4/2021

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