

Minutes
50th Annual General Meeting
New Zealand Microbiological Society
Held in Castle 1 Lecture Theatre, University of Otago, 23. November, 2005

Meeting opened 18:10
32 members present

Chair: Susan Turner
Secretary: Ralph Jack
Treasurer: Robin Simmonds

Apologies:

Iain Lamont

Minutes of the 49th Annual General Meeting:

Because of difficulties in getting the *NZ Bioscience* issue containing these appropriately distributed, the minutes were read aloud by the secretary.

Motion: that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Jan Schmid
Seconded: Chris Sissons
Result: Carried unanimously

Matters arising from the minutes of the 49th Annual General Meeting:

1. Constitutional changes.

The proposed constitutional from the 49 th AGM were raised. Sue Turner explained the essence of these changes and that since they had not been published with adequate warning owing to the late circulation of *NZ Bioscience*, it would not be possible to vote on them at this AGM. A vote was deferred to the next AGM.

2. Election of a student member to the executive.

Gillian Lewis reiterated her belief that this would be beneficial for student involvement in NZMS. Geoff Tompkins raised the issue of how they should be elected (*i.e.* by the entire assembly, or by the students). Sue Turner suggested that it might be more appropriate to ensure that a student representative be co-opted to any conference organizing committee, as this was probably the area where the students wished to have the most input. Greg Cook pointed out that this had been the case for the 50th Conference in Dunedin. Dan Power (student member) suggested that the

student rep needed to be on the executive of the NZMS as he felt they should be involved in issues such as the student grant-in-aid awards to attend the annual meeting. Gillian Lewis suggested that, as student member of the society are often transitory, they should be elected for a one year term. Greg Cook suggested this election take place at the AGM.

Motion: that a student representative be elected on an annual basis to the executive of the NZMS.

Moved: Gillian Lewis
Seconded: Dan Power
Result: Carried unanimously

Sue Turner and other members of the current executive pointed out that this motion will require constitutional change.

3. History of the NZMS.

Sue noted to the assembly that the 50th anniversary booklet *The First 50 Years: A Brief History of the New Zealand Microbiological Society* had now been assembled and published and was handed out to all conference delegates. Sue thanked the people involved (Frank Austin, Terry Maguire, Sandy Smith and John Tagg) for their tremendous effort and this was applauded.

4. The combined annual meeting together with the Australian Society for Microbiology, 2006.

Susan Turner revealed that her contact with Julian Rood (president of the ASM) had resulted in the Australians admitting that they had overlooked our planned combined meeting for 2006 and had made no provisions for our involvement. They had suggested we might want to hold a joint meeting together in 2008 in Melbourne.

Sue then asked for any comments from the floor regarding the issue of whether we should continue involvement with this society in light of their past record in combined meetings. No comments were forthcoming.

Correspondence:

None

Annual Reports:

1. Presidents report.

To be dealt with in general business.

2. Treasurers report.

Robin Simmonds displayed an overview of the financial state of the society and point out the treasurers report published in the current issue of NZBiosciences. Robin suggested that the society is in a sound financial position.

Motion: that the treasurer's report be accepted

Moved: Steve Flint

Seconded: Adrian Cookson

Result: Carried unanimously

Matters arising: Dan Power raised the issue of grants-in-aid that Robin had pointed out in the treasurer's report as being a substantial proportion of the society's total expenditure, amounting to some two-thirds of our annual income from subscriptions. Dan felt these did not adequately cover the costs of attending the annual meeting, particularly for local students. Chris Sissons felt the society had too much money. Clive Ronson suggested we need to come up with ways to spend some of the 'surplus' and that the executive should be charged with this responsibility. Steve Flint warned that society does not have the kind of surplus many assume as there is a need to have a reserve to cover the potentially disastrous shortfall that could arise from an unsuccessful conference. Andrew Hudson pointed out that there were a number of activities that the members could apply for funding to assist: for example, there had been a policy of supporting SIG activities, but that the SIG's had in recent years been rather low key and therefore had not made use of this. Jackie Aislabie suggested a student award for the best PhD and/or Masters, but was unsure how this should be organised and judged; John Tagg pointed out that such an award had previously existed but that this had now evolved into the current student speaker awards. Jan Schmid suggested that the reserves should be used first and foremost to support conference activities as this was, he felt, the single most important activity of the society. It was also suggested that dinner tickets be included in the student registration at the next conference, presumably at the society's expense.

Sue Turner summed up: the executive should come up with some suggestions for the next AGM. Sue suggested she should inform the society *via* NZBiosciences in the president's column.

3. Newsletter editors report.

No comments were made.

Reports from Special Interest Groups:

Public Health: Norberto Ricacho reported briefly on the activities of this SIG and informed the membership of the formation of the NZ association for food protection, information about which was included in the conference abstract book.

Education: Christine Fenton reported that she would be talking about the SIG activities during the conference in a special session and would send a report.

Report from Christine Fenton: A small group of interested members in the NZMS have reviewed a workbook that is published to assist students in NCEA level 1 Science. The review team found that the achievement standard most relating to Microbiology (90188) had the most errors in it. One of the more concerning things was that the questions and model answers in the booklet were taken from NZQA external examinations and that these had errors in them as well. The publisher and NZQA were contacted and it became obvious that the NZMS will have limited influence or opportunity to engage and correct these errors. The activities of the SIG Education for 2006 will be to rectify these errors and to attempt to make a professional connection with NZQA to make sure the errors do not occur in the first place.

Virology: Lance Jennings offered a brief summary of the activities of the Virology SIG.

Election of Officers:

None were nominated, all office bearers were prepared to continue their term.

General Business:

1. 2006 Annual Meeting.

Sue reported that the 2006 annual meeting would now be held in NZ and the venue (Hamilton) would be announced at the end of the conference. Sue also suggested that the 2007 conference could potentially be in conjunction with the NZSBMB and should take place in lower North Island or Nelson area.

2. Regulatory issues facing NZ microbiologists.

Sue Turner reported there was a general dissatisfaction with ERMA. Sue indicated ERMA had planned workshops to help deal with some of these and stressed the need for society members to get involved and explain/indicate their dissatisfaction with the regulatory issues holding back research in NZ. Sue also indicated that, from her discussion with various NZ parties, MoRST support effort to moderate ERMA involvement in NZ research and the negative effect they are having upon it. Sue felt there is a need to reform the NZMS subcommittee to address this issue and asked those interested to Email her.

3. SIG's.

Sue Turner asked for comments from the floor on how to improve the activities of the SIG's; no comments were forthcoming.

4. Newsletter.

Greg Cook outlined the difficulties in producing the newsletter and suggested the newsletter really needs to have regional editors; Greg suggested three – one from Auckland, one from Waikato/New Plymouth/Wellington and one from the South Island (currently Greg Cook, Otago). Greg stated these editors would need to be more proactive in gathering suitable material and more aggressive in their approach to seconding people to write for the magazine. Sue Turner suggested she would act as International sub-editor and collate information from ex-pats living overseas. Catia Delmiglio questioned whether publication of student work in *NZ Bioscience* would jeopardise future publication of work in a scientific journal and her fears were allayed by several senior investigators present. Jan Schmid questioned the need for a newsletter. Sue Turner pointed out that the magazine carries out one of our main functions, the dissemination of knowledge about microbiology in New Zealand and that the magazine reaches a wider audience than just the members of the society. Björn Heijstra volunteered to act as student sub-editor. Jackie Aislabie asked Greg to prepare a list of what would be useful for inclusion in *NZ Bioscience* and Greg agreed to do this.

5. Website.

Ralph Jack explained that the new website was now active and made a plea for suitable information for inclusion.

6. Adjustment of the student/retired membership to \$22:50

It was pointed out that the constitution states: the student/retired membership shall cost 50% of full membership. Currently full membership is \$45:00, therefore student/retired members will need to pay \$22:50 in order for us not to be in breach of the constitution.

Motion: that the cost of student/retired membership be raised to \$22:50, in line with the constitution.

Moved: Ralph Jack
Seconded: Catia Delmiglio
Result: Carried unanimously

The meeting closed at 19:05.

Ralph Jack
Secretary (2005)
New Zealand Microbiological Society, Inc.
23. November, 2005