



MINUTES OF THE 72nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PNGAA HELD AT THE HORNSBY RSL CLUB, SYDNEY on 29 April 2023

*Meeting opened at 11.30 am
President Chris Pearsall presided*

1. **Members Present and Apologies**

Members present as per Attendance Book noted to constitute quorum: Phil Ainsworth, Ralph Allan, Quentin Anthony, Patricia Bestic, Janet Dykgraaff, John Egerton, Steven Gagau, Robin Hodgson, Suellen Holland, George Ivanow, Stephen Lenahan, Robin Mead, Bev Melrose, Roslynn Membrey, Paul Munro, John Notley, Chris Pearsall, Alan Pierce, Roy Ranney, Kim Strutynski, Liz Thurston, Sara Turner, Andrea Williams

Apologies: Murrough Benson, Graham Bowden, Terry Chapman, Peter Comerford, John Copland, Don Grant, Pat Johnson, Ross Johnson, John Johnston, Belinda McCartney, Margaret Shakeshaft, Kimberly Smith, Glenn Summerhayes, Russell Wade, Chris Warrillow

Guests: David Allan, Jan Anthony, Michael Bestic, Jeremy Dykgraaff, Jessica Dykgraaff, Robin Gibson, Andrew Hamilton, Louise Pearsall

2. **Confirmation of Minutes of 71st AGM** *(available for viewing on the website prior to the meeting)*

MOTION: *That these Minutes be confirmed.*

Moved Chris Pearsall seconded Roy Ranney.

CARRIED

3. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the Minutes of the 71st AGM on 30 April 2022.

4. **President's Report**

President, Chris Pearsall, spoke to his written report. The report was received with acclamation and is reprinted at the end of these Minutes.

MOTION: *That the report be accepted.*

Moved Chris Pearsall seconded Phil Ainsworth

CARRIED

5. **Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Audited Financial Statements**

In the absence of Treasurer Murrough Benson, Roy Ranney presented the financial report for the year ended 31 December 2022, a copy of which was provided to members present prior to the meeting. This report included statements covering Income & Expenditure, Assets & Liabilities and the Auditor's Report. Roy spoke to Murrough's written summary which is reprinted at the end of these Minutes.

Any member requiring a copy of the Audited Financial Statements should contact the Treasurer on 0448 216 049 or by email: treasurer@pngaa.net.

MOTION: *That the Treasurer's report be received and adopted and that the Audited Financial Statements be adopted as a true reflection of the state of affairs for the year ended 31 December 2022; and that the Treasurer be instructed to complete and lodge the Annual return (Form A12) with NSW Fair Trading.*

Moved Roy Ranney, seconded Andrea Williams

CARRIED

6. **Election of Management Committee for 2023-24**

With the number of nominations received falling one short of the 12 vacancies to be filled, in accordance with Rule 16(2) of the PNGAA Rules the meeting noted the election (unopposed) of the following members of the Management Committee for 2023-24:

- Phil Ainsworth
- Murrough Benson (Treasurer)
- John Egerton (Editor)
- Steven Gagau
- Cheryl Marvell (Archivist & Collections)
- Chris Pearsall (President)
- Roy Ranney (Membership Officer)
- Max Uechtritz
- Jaap van der Kamp
- Chris Warrillow
- Andrea Williams

Under Rule 16(2) of the PNGAA Rules, the remaining position on the Committee is taken to be a casual vacancy. Currently, the positions of Secretary and Events Coordinator remain vacant.

Chris Pearsall thanked all those members who had nominated to serve on the Committee for the next two years.

7. General Discussion

(a) Membership Numbers

Membership Officer, Roy Ranney, spoke to a report on membership numbers and enthusiastic discussion followed on the issue of declining membership but no definitive conclusions were reached on how best to address the situation.

(b) Middle Head Draft Master Plan

Paul Munro AM spoke about the Association's draft submission to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (Harbour Trust) regarding the Middle Head Draft Master Plan. Submissions are due by 9 May 2023. Enthusiastic discussion followed and members were encouraged to make their own submissions.

(c) Discovery of the *MS Montevideo Maru*

Andrea Williams, just returned from the Silentworld expedition that found the *MS Montevideo Maru* on 18 April 2023 after nearly 81 years, spoke about this momentous occasion. Considerable enthusiastic discussion followed.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, Inc.
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Early in 2022 and after much evaluation and discussion, the committee agreed to set up a scholarship fund to support secondary school students in PNG in the pursuit of their secondary education. To ensure a proper level of governance and to make sure that the scholarship funds will be properly applied, we have been fortunate enough to gain support from Glenda Giles, a former teacher and district education inspector in PNG. She now lives in Wewak.

Our scholarship fees for the students are paid directly to the school, who have agreed to provide us with reports on the progress of the students in conjunction with Glenda. We have chosen to support students from the Sepik area as students from these provinces have difficulty in paying fees due to the lack of family income and lack of employment opportunities for their parents.

The PNG Government recently decided to financially support secondary schools in PNG, including our chosen school at Anguganak, West Sepik Province. As a result of the PNG government decision, the financial commitment by the PNGAA was substantially reduced so we have now agreed to sponsor six students instead of the original two.

On the recommendation of Glenda Giles and in conjunction with Mr Stephen Aruani, the Headmaster, the following students have been chosen to benefit from our scholarship fund:

1. Sampson Meiyapin. Male, Year 9.
2. Euthanneshia Meibo Female, Year 9.
3. Shepelle Hapika: Female Year 9.
4. Haimowi Nemantu: Male, Year 9.
5. Macquardah Anpan: Female Year 9.
6. Rally Aliawani: Male, Year 9.

Mr Aruani is an experienced English teacher himself and advises that many students in the local district have a very poor grasp of English in comparison to other subjects so is keen to improve this situation.

Glenda is well known to schools and has also assisted a group called the Tony Friend Scholarship Fund, set up in memory of Tony Friend, a former kiap in the Sepik Area.

It is planned to expand the PNGAA Scholarship Fund in due course, providing a very valuable and worthwhile contribution to the education of students in PNG.

The PNGAA congratulates committee members Andrea Williams and Max Uechtritz, together with the Silentworld Expedition Team, which recently searched for and located the Montevideo Maru in the South China Sea. Using state-of-the-art technology, the expedition located the ship nearly 4,200m down. It had been torpedoed on 1 July 1942, nearly 81 years ago. We look forward to hearing from Andrea Williams, who has just returned, later in the meeting.

Attending the 80th Anniversary Commemorative Service of the sinking of the Montevideo Maru and fall of New Guinea islands in July 2022 brought home to me the fact that the link between the PNGAA and the Rabaul & Montevideo Maru Group does enhance and build on the aims and objectives of the PNGAA by providing another significant historical episode to the story of

Papua New Guinea and, by drawing in to our PNGAA story another significant part of PNG history. The Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Memorial Service and Dinner were attended by a good number of PNGAA members and also caused me to reflect on what can happen when members support the activities of the PNGAA. We are a much stronger organisation when we work together and contribute what we can to the success of our Association.

Your committee along with member volunteers works hard to make our Association a success, but I would like to ask all members to reflect on what can be achieved when the committee and the members do what they can to support the aims and objectives of the PNGAA.

We are looking at how we can increase our membership by offering corporate membership to interested companies and, as always, we welcome suggestions from PNGAA members.

Later in the meeting we will hear from Roy Ranney on the membership status.

We will also hear from Paul Munro who has been greatly assisting the committee and association in writing a submission to the Sydney Harbour [Federation](#) Trust in response to the Draft Management Plan for Middle Head in Sydney. The PNGAA has a close affiliation with Middle Head through the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) which occupied the area for over 50 years and was a pivotal part of the Australian/PNG relationship. The failure to acknowledge this in the Draft Management Plan is felt acutely by PNGAA members.

Taking a nation to a peaceful independence is surely something to proudly acknowledge by Australia. An interactive centre of collaboration between Australian and Pacific communities would benefit all. The connection with 'place' is obvious.

Our committee has long believed there is an opportunity to use a portion of the Middle Head site for an appropriate living, interactive, tribute to Australia's work developing Papua New Guinea, and taking it to independence. Highlighting this and other Pacific Islanders who called Middle Head home, would improve Australia's relationship with the Pacific Islands. This could be in the form of an Australian Community Centre for Pacific Nations – a focal point for the Australian/Pacific/PNG relationship.

Frustratingly, PNGAA was not invited as a stakeholder as part of the 'community consultation' with the latest plan. There seems to be a revolving door with Draft Master Plans which each require enormous hours of work to read through and respond to. We are grateful to Paul Munro for helping our committee with the PNGAA submission.

In 2022, PNG held its 10th national elections, described by some as the worst since elections were first held in 1977, due to inadequate preparation, violence and poor organisation. These elections made history by returning 64 percent of incumbent MPs to parliament when normally only about 50 percent are returned. The Government projects that PNG's economy will grow by 4.0 percent in 2023 after doing poorly in 2021 due primarily to COVID 19. The 2023 budget, announced in November, increased government expenditure by more than 10 percent leading to a deficit of 5.4 percent of GDP. PNG has benefitted from the war in Ukraine with higher petroleum prices resulting in a windfall in petroleum and mining tax revenues. According to its own legislation, the Government should save a significant part of this windfall in its Sovereign Wealth Fund, however in the 2023 budget the government decided to fully allocate the extra resource revenues to increased investments and further house-hold relief. The 2022 elections were the fourth in a row in which the incumbent Prime Minister was returned. This success only adds to the pressure on them since a vote of no confidence has become the only way to change prime ministers in PNG. Marape will have his work cut out for him manoeuvring politics in late 2023, when the 18-month grace period in which a no-confidence vote cannot be held nears its end. PNG's fluidity of political alliances will then come to the fore and the inevitable jostling for a vote of no-confidence will begin. So, PNG continues to make some progress and hopefully the run up to the 2027 elections will see more progress in PNG's growth and development.

| In finalizing, I thank every member of the PNGAA Management Committee, and it's many helpers, for the enormous work involved throughout the year so that the association runs smoothly and contributes to the Australian-Papua New Guinea relationship in a proactive and beneficial way.

Chris Pearsall



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TREASURER'S REPORT
Murrough Benson

A deficit of \$920 was recorded in the year ended 31 December 2022, compared with a surplus of \$6,436 in the previous year. This result was, however, impacted by two important one-off expenses totalling \$10,737 associated with the Rabaul and Montevideo Maru (RMvM) Group: redevelopment of its website and a *Montevideo Maru* memorial seat and story board installed at the Mornington and District Memorial Gardens at Mornington, Victoria,.

Partially offsetting the impact of this one-off expenditure on the bottom line was a most generous donation of \$5,000 from long-term member, Ken McKinnon, to help the Association further pursue its objectives. Ken was the Director of Education in the then Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG) from 1966 to 1973.

On the income side of the ledger:

- Membership subscriptions were down \$2,297 as the long-term slow decline in member numbers continued. New members continue to come on board but not in sufficient numbers to offset the losses. Membership rates have not changed since September 2020.
- Net income from functions (including raffles and silent auctions) was up \$1,754 as the easing of COVID-19 restrictions allowed numbers at events to increase as well as additional regional events to be held. A Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Group dinner was also held for the first time since 2017 and attracted around 100 people in Canberra.
- Net trading income fell by \$2,138, largely reflecting reduced sales of the PNGAA book *Land of the Unexpected* (published in 2021) and virtually no commission earned on the sale of non-PNGAA items that had boosted earnings quite significantly in 2021.
- Interest earned on investments showed a pleasing increase of \$916 as a result of higher rates on offer when the two term deposits were rolled over mid-year.
- In addition to the \$5,000 general donation already mentioned, members generously donated \$2,120 to the newly established Scholarship Fund.

On the other side of the ledger:

- Journal layout and printing costs were down \$1,565. Jeannette Gilligan (trading as Dragonwick Self-Publishing Solutions), who does such a wonderful job of setting up *PNG Kundu* for printing, very generously reduced her charge by 20% early in the year. We also enjoyed, for the first time, the full-year benefit of reduced printing costs achieved after changing over to Lismore City Printery (LCP) in mid-2021. Our printer's business was devastated by the floods that hit Lismore in Northern NSW in February 2022 but they still managed to arrange for our printing to be done by another printer in the region and at no additional cost to us. We are very pleased that LCP is now pretty well back to normal operations again.

- Partly offsetting the journal layout and printing costs was an increase of \$806 (10.9%) in postage costs of the journal.
- It was a nice surprise to see our insurance costs (for public and product liability cover as well as Association personnel cover) come down by \$268 (11.1%) for the year.
- Due to the need early in the year to expand storage capacity to accommodate the growing PNGAA Collection, storage costs increased from \$3,152 to \$6,870. This increase also reflected a quite substantial increase in rental rates.
- Website costs were almost halved in 2022 (down \$2,101), largely because in 2021 we paid in full for a three-year hosting and management arrangement that came at a substantial discount on the annual rate. One-off technical support charges were also well down.

The Association's financial position remains sound. Total Member Funds (the difference between Total Assets and Total Liabilities) fell by the amount of the deficit generated in 2022 to \$138,433. Notwithstanding this solid position, some vulnerabilities remain.

Apart from the long-term decline in membership, for as long as the Association has been in existence the results achieved, both financially and in terms of services delivered to members, have been heavily dependent on volunteers whose enthusiastic support has always been greatly appreciated. I mentioned this in my report last year but it bears repeating. Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fill gaps in this volunteer workforce as people drop out for a range of reasons, other commitments, health and age amongst them. The alternative if we can't find people to help out with a range of tasks will be to resort to commercial providers, the cost of which will have to be passed on to all members if we are not to erode our Member Funds, potentially quite quickly. Such providers would also be very unlikely to deliver the level of personal attention to which our members have become accustomed. So if you think you may be able to help out in any way, no matter how small, please let us know. Location is not necessarily a constraint and you don't need to be on the Committee either. Alternatively, if you know of someone who is not a member and may be able to help we'd love to hear from them too.

In closing, I move the motion that:

The Audited Financial Statements tabled here today be adopted as a true record of the financial transactions of the Association for the year ended 31 December 2022 and the Treasurer be instructed to prepare and lodge the 2023 Annual Return with the Department of Fair Trading.

Do I have a seconder?