



New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists

Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists Inc. was held at the Meeting Room C2.5, International Convention Centre Sydney, Darling Harbour, Sydney, Australia on 26 September 2018 at 1.00 PM.

The President Marian McKenzie welcomed 15 members present and joining via Skype: Present John Clements, Ranjith Pathirana, Paula Jameson, Stevie Noe, Samarth, Chelsea Kerr, Kioumars Ghamkar, Rainer Hoffman, Paul Dijkwel, Jayanthi Nadarajan, Vishna Weerarathne, Claudia Wiedow and Liya Mathew. Joined via Skype Mike Clearwater. Apologies from Kimberley Snowden, David Whitehead, Matthew Turnbull, Nick Albert, Nijat Imin, Julian Eaton-Rye, Richard Macknight, Julian Heyes, Tony Conner, Erin O'Donoghue, Sebastian Levzinger, Philippa Barrel, Brian Jordan, Cate Macinnis-Ng and Kathy Schwinn.

1. **The minutes of the 2017 AGM** were accepted (**moved:** Marian McKenzie, **seconded** Paula Jameson, carried) subjected to a correction proposed by Paula Jameson to last year's President's Report, where it was stated it was two decades since the Society last had a female president, in fact it has been three decades. Marian McKenzie noted that this change has already been made in last year report.

2. **Matters arising from last year minutes:** There were no matters arising.

3. **President's Report and Business:**

Marian McKenzie highlighted several points from the President's Report tabled for the meeting: She reiterated that the Society held its 40th anniversary and some outstanding people have led the Society through those years. The Society joins ComBio every second conference making it a 4 year cycle as COMBIO is a biannual event. This year ComBio has recorded a significant profit and the Society is eligible to share profit on the basis of proportion of attendees – 17 this year. She was of the view that QMB is a meaningful event for members of the society although there is no profit sharing arrangement, in contrast to Plant Science Central and most other conferences we attend. The Society partly funded 3 students to attend ComBio2018 but so far no student has applied for a student travel award to attend other national or international conferences. The President congratulated Roger Slack award winner **Prof Paula Jameson** and Michael McManus award winner **Liya Mathew**. She mentioned that the Society was represented by the President and Secretary respectively on the two days the Royal Society Te Apārangi had its Members Forum. We are partners at Global Plant Council and their AGM will be held in Baltimore this year and encouraged any member to attend if they are in the area at the time (3 November 2018). As outgoing President after serving her two-year term,

Marian McKenzie thanked **Mike Clearwater** for his contribution as Treasurer and **Ranjith Pathirana** as Secretary, **Stevie Noe** and **Samarth** for managing the Society website and FaceBook page respectively, and also to the Council and the membership in general for their support. **Richard Macknight** who is the current Vice President will assume duties of President and she wished him success. Paula Jameson moved that the President's report be accepted subjected to adding **Marian McKenzie**'s name to the list of President's and Secretaries (seconded by Rainer Hoffman, carried).

4. Treasurers Report and Business:

The Treasurer Mike Clearwater described the expenses and earnings of the society in the past financial year ending 31 March 2018. Expenses were greater than income by \$ 1837.78, largely because the reimbursement for the Annals of Botany Lecture sponsorship hasn't been received yet and also we sponsored many students to the Plant Science Conference as well as Michael McManus awardee for 2016 was also reimbursed in the current year. Nevertheless the declining trend of the Society funds over the last 3 years was mentioned. It was suggested that the Society was created not to accumulate funds but to engage in scientific activities of its members. As long as we have a buffer of about \$10,000, there is no reason for concern. The Treasurer mentioned that there has not been an increase in membership fees since 2008. The membership fees were discussed and it was proposed that full member fees should increase to \$50 per year from next year and associate member fee to \$20 per year. President took a vote and the proposal was carried unopposed. Marian McKenzie proposed that the Treasurers Report is in order and Paul Dijkwel seconded, carried.

5. Election of Officers

The President mentioned that all the Officers were willing to be re-elected with Richard Macknight standing as President, Mike Clearwater as Treasurer and Ranjith Pathirana as Secretary. She noted that currently we have no-one standing for Vice-President and asked members to consider if they might be interested in this position. She asked if there are any other members willing to serve in the Council. Paul Dijkwel mentioned his willingness. With no other nominations to the Council, the President tabled the list of Council members standing for election as follows:

President – Richard Macknight

Treasurer – Mike Clearwater

Secretary – Ranjith Pathirana

Immediate Past President – Marian McKenzie

Members of Council: Nick Albert, Jayanthi Nadarajan, Nijat Imin, David Burritt, Paul Dijkwel and Reiner Hoffman.

The officers were elected by unanimous vote.

6. Proposed change to constitution wording (annual auditing requirement)

President reminded about her email to membership regarding the proposed change to constitution. She reiterated that, as currently written, our constitution says we should have our books audited annually. This was written into the constitution when the society was established. Current information on the charities website show the legal criteria for a **review** if expenditure >\$500k, for an **audit** >\$1million, and/or if our **constitution requires** it.

Both an audit and a review have to be carried out by a qualified auditor, which in our case means an expense that is likely to be high relative to the expenditure being reviewed. Considering our annual expenditure is way below the above legal criteria, we need to discuss removing the audit requirement from our constitution. This may be completely removed or could be replaced by wording indicating our books should be checked by an accounting practitioner, if we felt this was necessary. The

Secretary mentioned that responses from members Nick Albert and Julian Heyes, and also Joanna Putterill, David Whitehead, Cate Macinnis-Ng, Julian Eaton-Rye, Matthew Turnbull and Ian McIvor, were received by email and all were supportive of re-wording the part in the constitution to avoid unnecessary expenditure on reviewing or auditing. Paul Dijkwel felt the audit is a deterrent against fraud and signature by two doesn't necessarily mean that it is a good control over fraud. Jayanthi Nadarajan said that a similar society that she is a member is governed by trustees and that model could work for NZSPB. Paula Jameson suggested that the officers of the Society are doing a voluntary job and we should ensure that their work is easy and said she felt two signatures for any expenditure is enough.

After more deliberations Paula Jameson proposed that the Constitution wording be changed to remove any mention of the requirement for an audit and a statement such as “**An independent person nominated by the Council will check the accounts annually**” be included in the constitution. The proposal was put to the voting and was passed unanimously.

7. **Conferences 2019 and beyond**

The President mentioned that plans are underway to hold the next annual conference, Plant Science Central, in Palmerston North on 2-4 July 2019. In addition there are suggestions for our participation in the International Congress on Photosynthesis 2-7 August 2010 in Rotorua (by Julian Eaton-Rye) and IX International Postharvest Symposium in Rotorua during 9-13 November 2020. We are now participating in COMBIO once in two conferences (each four years) and hence we will not be participating officially in Melbourne COMBIO to be held in 2020. Ranjith Pathirana suggested that we approach the organisers of COMBIO to secure some oral presentations for New Zealand scientists, particularly to our members including students if we are to participate officially in this conference in future. It was noted that except for Roger Slack and Michael McManus award lectures, Kioumars Ghamkar was the only New Zealand speaker among plant sessions.

8. **Global Plant Council (GPC) Update**

The President mentioned that NZSPB is a member of the GPC and the next Annual Members Meeting is due to be held in Baltimore, USA on 3rd November 2018. She asked members to consider attending this meeting on behalf of NZSPB if a possibility exists.

9. **Royal Society Te Apārangi Constituent Organisation Forum Day Update**

The constituent member organisation days were attended by Marian McKenzie on 8th December 2017 and Ranjith Pathirana in June 2018. Ranjith Pathirana said he has distributed the minutes of the forum he attended to all members in his email of 21/9/2018 with a link to the video. He mentioned that the current President Prof Wendy Larner's priorities are Mātauranga Māori, Equity and Diversity and ECR and Mid-career Researchers.

10. **Roger Slack Award 2019**

Only researchers within 10 years of their PhD will be eligible for Roger Slack award in 2019. **Marian McKenzie** congratulated **Paula Jameson** for winning this year's award.

11. **Michael McManus Award 2019**

President mentioned that papers from both MSc and PhD theses are eligible for the award of Michael McManus award. **Marian McKenzie** congratulated **Liya Mathew** on receiving the Michael McManus award, this year. Marian reminded members to consider student members who might be eligible for the award, if they submit a paper arising primarily from their PhD work, within four years of completing their degree, and also including members who are still in their PhD programme.

12. **Annals of Botany Lecture 2019**

Marian McKenzie re-iterated that the Annals of Botany is willing to support travel for a keynote speaker to our annual conference and members were asked to come up with nominations for next year's conference. Last year we had **Dr Yves Gibon** from INRA, University of Bordeaux. The expenses will be reimbursed when the speaker publishes a paper in Annals of Botany based on his/her presentation. Kioumars Ghamkar mentioned the names of Drs Christina Walters and Christopher Richards from USDA as possible candidates for next year.

13. **Any Other Business**

Paula Jameson proposed a vote of thanks to **Marian McKenzie** for her contribution to the Society during her tenure as President.

Marian McKenzie thanked all the members for attending and closed the meeting at 2.05 pm.

Minutes taken by Ranjith Pathirana.