



Sustainable Australia Inc

Minutes of 2019 Annual General Meeting

Saturday 7 December 2019 at 3:15pm (for 3:30pm to 5pm) in Sydney.

Crows Nest Community Centre, 2 Ernest Pl, Crows Nest, NSW

1. President's welcome

The President and Chairperson William Bourke (WB) welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the committee of himself, John Haydon (JH), Susan Bowes (SB) and Mark Ferris (MF).

WB also acknowledged other party officials and employees present as follows:

State Director, Victoria - Kelvin Thomson

Part time Administration officer - Hana Oh

WB thanked and acknowledged those that have travelled from interstate as well as candidates, who will get a chance to introduce themselves and offer their election thoughts today.

WB noted that a quorum of 8 is satisfied and that it was 3:35pm.

2. Apologies

WB noted the following people sent their apologies:

Paul Gabriel
Patricia Niel
Cita Murphy
Kay Dunne
Marilyn Hawkins
Kenneth Davis
George Bate
Michael Stenford
Ronald Rogers
David Honey
Michael Jones
Suzanne Daly
Christopher Daly
John Kearsley
Peter Green
Debbie Smythe
Roger Howard
Marilyn Riedy
Michael Clark
Jessie Bijok
Denis Gill
Richard Hatcher
Simone Dunsford
Mike Cottee
Anne Whatman

3. Minutes of previous AGM

Minutes of 2018 AGM were recently approved by the committee, and also sent to various 2019 attendees that also attended the 2018 AGM – and then summarised by the Chairperson.

Several 2018 AGM attendees including Alan Magnusson and the National Committee were present to review the minutes and agreed they are accurate.

The committee also spoke to their accuracy.

WB asked that we move a motion that the minutes be accepted as a true record.

Alan Magnusson moved the motion.

Patrick Conaghan seconded the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously by a show of hands.

2018 minutes were signed as a true record (by President WB and Secretary Mark Ferris).

4. 2019 Finance Report

WB noted that the accounting firm employed to record and complete financial information to be presented to members at the AGM is BRW Top 100 accounting firm Stewart Brown and Co.

WB as Treasurer presented the 2019 Financial Report.

Key points:

The figures are now split into three sections, to include NSW and Victorian state bank accounts.

As of 30 June, Group figures were as follows:

Income:	\$621,549	(Federal \$415,588)
Expenses:	\$469,391	(Federal \$352,433)
Profit:	\$152,158	(Federal \$63,126)
Assets:	\$189,842	(Federal 67,334)
Liabilities:	\$22,309	(Federal \$21,846)
Net assets:	\$167,534	(Federal \$78,502)

WB asked if there were any questions.

Q: Julian Holland ask about the donation expense of \$6300 from the federal party.

A: WB stated that the donation in question is a donation from the Federal party donation to the NSW state branch for the 2019 state election.

Q: Julian asked whether there was motor vehicle depreciation.

A: WB noted that there was accumulated depreciation included on the next line in the balance sheet.

Q: Patrick asked about fines and the absence of money accountable to the ACT:

A: WB replied that it was a parking fine due to being held up in a meeting.

A: JH replied that the ACT runs economically, doesn't have their own bank account and funds have previously been drawn from the federal party.

A: WB added that the party aims to state an ACT bank account before the next ACT election.

Q: Justin Thomas asked if we use consulting firms?

A: WB noted that we do have consultants for political advice and other things and could be described also as wages. WB also noted that aside from design and print media not much else was utilised.

A: JH added that we are currently also employing a market research company for the next financial year.

Q: Adele Jones asked if we were looking to spend more money on marketing?

A: WB noted that we do a bit of advertising and marketing through Facebook and would consider this question more on the Q&A segment of the meeting

WB asked for a motion to accept the 2018/19 financial report as accurate.

Warren Grzic moved the motion.

Wayne Rigg seconded the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously by a show of hands.

5. Party Update

WB noted that most people keep up to date on the happenings via the eNewsletter, but he will mention the following:

National membership is currently around 2750.

WB acknowledged the work of the committee here and HQ staff, including Mark Ferris until recently and Hana Oh in the audience, adding that the work is relentless and admin support is vital.

WB explained that many small administrative tasks are required to be done at HQ like ongoing research into news and political developments, preparation and emailing of eNewsletters, financial accounts, website refinement and upgrades, database management, committee meetings management, etc. There are also many enquiries and requests from various stakeholders including members and the general public.

It has been a particularly busy year, with three elections in the last 12 months.

Running a minor party with very little resources against publicly funded major parties is difficult. We are on an uneven playing field. As a result, many minor parties fall by the wayside. An example of this is Cory Bernardi's Australian Conservatives party. Despite a major platform in the Senate and significant media coverage, his party folded through lack of success. SAP received more votes than the Conservatives in all elections we contested, which is an achievement in itself.

For our party, the big focus this year has been the three elections:

- Victoria, NSW and Federal

Summary of the VIC, NSW and federal elections were as follows:

- Breaking through the 4 per cent barrier in the lower house for the first time
- Setting a new state electorate record of 7 per cent
- Achieving over 10 per cent in some voting centres (polling places)
- Running over 100 candidates
- Mobilising over 500 volunteers
- Achieving over 100,000 #1 votes
- Winning a seat in the Victorian Parliament

There's a lot to be positive about but we also acknowledge the challenges.

After the 2016 federal election, the committee determined that federal elections were not winnable at this point. We determined that we need to focus our limited resources on more winnable elections – being state upper houses and local government elections.

Apart from contesting the 2016 ACT election, the Victorian election last November was our first of these and we were successful, with the election of Clifford Hayes MP.

NSW was the second major state election and we only just missed out on a place in the Upper House to the Animal Justice Party, which have been in the NSW Parliament for four years. Although disappointing and frustrating, this was also a very encouraging result and shows that our strategy is on track.

The next phase is the 2020 local government elections, particularly in Victoria and NSW.

WB announced he will be volunteering to run for the North Sydney Council and would like membership help. WB noted that the chance of being elected was reasonable.

WB noted that a couple of major challenges that continue to dog us are:

- A lack of resources for the federal party, particularly financial and administration support
- Mainstream media de-platforming who want to promote either purely 'progressive' or 'conservative' parties rather than a centrist party; and
- Smearing by the hard left in elections, particularly via social media.

WB stated that these are key factors in stunting our votes and therefore electoral success.

WB thanked party candidates and noted that we'll leave further comments to the Q&A segment.

6. Appointment of national committee

WB thanked the committee for the huge amount of voluntary work they commit to the party.

He added that serving members are retiring, but are eligible for re-election. Most are seeking re-election, as follows:

WB as President and Treasurer.

John Haydon as Vice President.

Susan Bowes as ordinary committee member.

New nominations:

Simone Dunsford from South Australia as ordinary committee member

Kelvin Thomson from Victoria as ordinary committee member (Kelvin is State Director of Victoria)

Richard Hatcher from Victoria as Secretary (Richard is State Organiser in Victoria)

We therefore have sole nominations for all seven positions.

Mark Ferris is retiring as Secretary and from the committee. WB thanked MF for his enormous contribution across several campaigns in 2018/19.

The process for election of committee members was outlined, as per clause 16 in the constitution as follows:

Clause 16. Election of committee members

(1) Nominations of candidates for election as office-bearers of the association or as ordinary committee members:

(a) must be made in writing, signed by 2 members of the association and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of the nomination), and

(b) must be delivered to the secretary of the association at least 7 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.

(4) If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated are taken to be elected.

WB noted that:

William Bourke is the sole nomination for president.

John Haydon is the sole nomination for vice president.

William Bourke is the sole nomination for treasurer.

Richard Hatcher is the sole nomination for secretary.

There with three nominations for ordinary committee member positions.

Susan Bowes, Simone Dunsford and Kelvin Thomson are nominated for ordinary committee member positions.

WB asked if anyone had any further questions about the candidates or process.

Q: Andrew Anthony asked if casual vacancies could be filled without notice?

A: WB after reviewing the constitution said that at the AGM, casual vacancies could be filled through a nomination process at the AGM.

Richard Belcher then stated he would like to be one of the vacant ordinary committee member positions.

Kelvin Thomson nominated Richard Belcher as an ordinary committee member.

Julian Holland seconded the nomination.

Richard Belcher accepted the nomination.

Q: Patrick Conaghan asked if WB was happy to be both Treasurer and President.

A: WB stated that he was happy to do so and nobody else expressed interest.

WB asked if more people would like to nominate for ordinary committee member and nobody replied.

That being the case, as per the constitution, the President declared they be appointed as follows:

WB as President. JH as VP. WB as Treasurer. RH as Secretary. SB, SD, KT and RB as ordinary committee members.

7. General Business

7.1 Campaign review

WB asked KT to present his independent campaign review and an update on the office of Clifford Hayes.

KT then outlined his review.

KT first reviewed suggestions made during Andrew McNamara's tenure as president and noted that all were implemented or being implemented as a work-in-progress as follows.

1. That we retain the name Sustainable Australia for the foreseeable future.
2. That we have policies on a variety of issues (rather than just population) and campaign on these.
3. That we register a new logo
4. That we develop local networks to grow the party.
5. That we progress the focus on local and state elections.
6. That we need to endorse candidates earlier to enable longer campaigning periods.
7. That we increase media engagement.
8. That we budget for more administrative capacity.
9. That we better develop relationships with other minor parties.
10. That we need a ground up approach to building membership, including through local branches.
11. That we expand the national committee with a particular focus on political experience and geographic.
12. That we seek high profile candidates. KT said Dick Smith was highlighted in the review and that the party had approached him but he was not interested.

KT highlighted that we achieved 59,000 Senate votes in the federal election or .4% of the vote.

KT stated that in the NSW election we received 65,000 votes in the Legislative Council with 1.46% of the vote.

KT said that in the Victorian election we focused on the South Metropolitan Legislative Council Region and through deals were able to get Clifford Hayes elected.

KT said that there was room for improvement but there were also reasons to be proud of the party's achievements.

KT stated that most critical feedback was about improving public reach but not many were critical of the policy. He stated that the policy was detailed and had good support from the membership.

KT said we have a range of suggestions on strategy. They included: Countering the claim that Sustainable Australia is Right wing or racist; Providing rebuttals for arguments against us; Encouraging a more diverse group of people into the party; Amalgamating with similar parties; Giving people on local levels more control over party activity; Preparing a candidate handbook; Targeting single seats rather than every Senate seat: Improving our how-to-vote cards including making them bigger.

KT then listed his recommendations from his campaign review as follows:

1. That Sustainable Australia continue to establish formal local Branches wherever we have a critical mass of supporters. That such Branches be given scope to engage in local campaigning and fundraising.
2. That Sustainable Australia focus on the forthcoming round of local government elections in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.
3. That Sustainable Australia seek expressions of interest from intending candidates for local, State and Federal elections as soon as possible.
4. That Sustainable Australia prepare a Candidate Handbook, to include a Manual for Council Candidates and Councillors.
5. That Sustainable Australia seeks to lift its media profile with more regular Media Releases and public comment.
6. That Sustainable Australia aim to produce personalised How-to-vote cards which carry the names and photographs of our candidates, and, where appropriate, numbered instructions on where voters should place their preferences.

KT went onto outline Clifford Hayes MP election strategy and more recent activity, including an attempt in the Victorian Parliament to return real planning powers to local councils and communities, at the expense of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

Specifically, the VCAT reform bill and the results from this. KT highlighted that the media coverage was disappointing on this issue.

KT went onto talk about donations to Casey Council from property developers and that this corruption link was an obvious strategic issue for us to campaign around.

KT handed the review document to the committee via WB.

7.2 Candidates

WB asked whether any election candidate would like to introduce themselves and speak about their electorate and experience.

Warren Grzic spoke of his experience running in the State and Federal Upper Houses. Warren stated he campaigned all over the state and the reception of voters varied from place to place. Warren said he would prefer to support others rather than run in the 2020 local government elections.

Andrew Anthony spoke about running for local government in Wollongong and more recently in the 2019 NSW election. He said he would run again but only if he had considerable support. He believed that Over development would appeal in his area of Wollongong due to increasing high-rise apartments.

Angela Dunnett talked of her experience running in Balmain for the NSW 2019 election. She said next time, committing earlier to campaign would be good. When privately talking to competing candidates she said they all believed we needed to have a better conversation about population. Angela stated that there were some people who were not receptive of the Sustainable Australia message and spoke negatively about us.

Steve Molloy spoke about his experience running in the NSW and federal 2019 elections. He said that you need to get involved to get anything out of politics. He stated he learnt a lot throughout the process including that he should work on those that get our message rather than those that don't. Steve said around one third people would take the flyer anyway. One third would take a few and another third would just take a specific flyer from their political party. Steve elaborated on the cost of corflutes and sandwich boards and that the major parties really out-do us in this area. He added that you need a lot of help. Steve said he agreed with all the policies of Sustainable Australia.

Justin Thomas spoke of his experience running in NSW and federal elections in 2019. He wanted to give people a choice on public policy issues.

WB thanked all other candidates in the room who ran in recent elections.

7.3 Local government elections

WB noted that local government elections are coming up in 2020 in Queensland, NSW and Victoria.

WB added that we'll likely be running in a few areas in NSW including Albury, Wollongong, North Sydney and Central Coast. WB will be putting his hand up to run in North Sydney and seeking volunteers for both letterboxing and our monthly Crows Nest markets on the third Saturday in every month.

KT welcomed expressions of interest in Victorian Local Government Election. He suggested that the Southern Metropolitan region would be a likely strategic focus due to a lot of overdevelopment. He mentioned that the Victorian Labor Party were pushing single-member wards which wouldn't favour small parties. KT then covered a few items of campaign focus including stopping overdevelopment.

7.4 ACT election 2020

JH highlighted the difference for the ACT in regard to there being no local government (council). Despite it being hard to get elected as a minor party in the ACT, JH said we should still contest the election. The current strategy for 2020 is to focus on one of the five ACT electorates due to limited resources.

7.5 Merchandise

WB noted that merchandise was available including flyers for t-shirts and caps for \$10. New and improved flyers are available for letterboxing.

8. Member Q&A

Various questions were asked and answered as follows:

Q: Patrick Conaghan asked whether distributing flyers over Christmas was a wasteful expense?

A: WB said that people had more time at Christmas so there are potential positives and we need to keep chipping away at awareness building.

Q: Patrick Conaghan then asked about Keep Sydney Open Party and stated that they might not be around at the next state election.

A: WB said KSO will likely run in the local gov election, specifically Sydney but we will keep an eye on them.

Q: Rob Forsyth suggested we need a strategy to get to young people and that maybe online marketing would be good. He also suggested schools could be a possibility to target.

A: WB thanked Rob for his comment.

Q: Julian Holland talked about his experience campaigning including that a lot of people already know who they're voting for and noted how frustrating it was that we also get de-platformed. He also suggested we investigate targeting youth environmental campaign groups, then asked KT about media attention with Clifford Hayes in Victoria and whether it gets around the de-platforming.

A: KT said that Clifford was initially interviewed by 3AW but that the ABC has been difficult with just one (hostile) interview. Local area media is easier but broader media is hard to get and often ignores us because he is not a 'swing vote' in Parliament.

Q: Warren Grzic spoke of campaign feedback at non-SAP events he attended. He then asked about how we could raise more funds?

A: WB said we have to rely on our broader membership for fundraising, especially with continued smaller donations such as \$10 per month. The more councillors and MPs we get elected, the bigger platform we'll have, and the easier it will be to fundraise.

Q: Adele Jones said she only heard about SAP in the latest election when WB was in a minor party pre-election radio interview on the ABC. She also preferred broader advertising rather than flyers and suggested widespread advertising and promotions, including catchy images.

Q: Steve Molloy thanked WB and everyone from SAP for their efforts and suggested strategy for creating video content in a batch to release in different campaigns.

Q: Ian Bruce has been in the party in for a year and criticised the broad statements on some policies, specifically negative gearing that he felt was too broad in wanting to stop all (new) negative gearing.

A: WB said the party is aiming for a more diverse economy with more affordable housing, so the broad thrust is to encourage a re-allocation of investment into our factories, farms and small businesses rather than property speculation. However, current negative gearing concessions would be grandfathered. We welcome feedback and suggestions at all times and always consider this in the next policy review.

A: KT added that policy reviews can take up resources and we have a good consensus and anonymity on policy at the moment.

A: JH added that we had a policy review that sought all member views in 2017.

Q: Ian Bruce added that we should have it written up how we review membership suggestions.

A: WB responded that we do have this information on the website on our join page and that we do give criteria for policy submissions when we conduct a policy review. He added that Ian is welcome to send us an email on policy at any time.

Q: Andrew Anthony offered a few suggestions including a policy on air quality and noted that he was helping with SAP's Wikipedia page to protect it from sabotage. He thanked William for his efforts including coming to Wollongong.

A: WB thanked Andrew for his comment.

Q: Angela Dunnett commented on her concerns regarding issues and campaigning including air pollution overdevelopment, climate change, koalas, a youth ambassador and corruption.

A: WB thanked Angela for her comment.

Q: Justin Thomas asked how feedback for the election review is processed.

A: WB said that all member feedback went to Kelvin and the whole committee. The committee can now respond to the feedback formally and highlight actions the party should take. Resources allowing, these suggestions will then be actioned.

A: KT added that the progressive left often have an implicit open borders sentiment. Many public figures and environment groups are hesitant to speak about population issues.

9. Close of formal business and meeting

The President thanked the members for attendance ongoing support of the party, invited attendees for a drink at a nearby pub and declared the meeting closed at 17:45pm.

Signed as a true record:

Chairman Committee member
Date