

ROBERTSON HERITAGE RAILWAY STATION INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES 2020

Held in the Fettle's Shed at 3.00pm on Wednesday, 16 September 2020

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Present — Ian Wallace, Anne Wilson, Neil Harvey, Rona Goold, Steve Carey, Russell Bailey, Peter Glass, Angus Webster, Sandra Wallace, Noel Rothwell, Rod Visman, Graham Brown, David Laidlew, Neil Rolley.

Apologies — Jim Wilson, Ian Douglas, Robert Goldsack, John Hopkins, Marion Harvey, Tony McCoy.

2. **Minutes of last AGM, held on Thursday, 26 September 2019** – Read by Rona. Moved Rona, seconded Noel that minutes be accepted. Agreed unanimously. Signed by The President.

3. **President's report for 2019/2020**– Neil Harvey.

Neil Harvey : attention was drawn to the full text of this report already circulated and loaded on the RHRS website. Neil focussed on the main points, namely the impact of the Covid pandemic on the activities of RHRS which resulted in the cancellation of the ECHR Cockatoo Run trains, the annual autumn art prize and the Classic car event; curtailment of our normal schedule of business meetings and the reduction of many of the usual social interactions due to Covid restrictions.

However the year did finally see the completion of station repainting - a major task which utilised a heritage grant and financial assistance from our lessee ARTC. Further, the information signs project which was partly funded from a Federal Government grant is well under way and will likely be completed in November.

To the credit of our core group, essential works such as management of the garden and grounds continued in spite of difficulties thanks to Ian and his working bees. The gardens are essential to the future viability of RHRS the President said. Ongoing minor maintenance issues were dealt with so the Station and grounds were kept in a presentable state. The Model Train group continued to meet regularly and is working on two new layouts for the future. This is a stimulating and enjoyable pastime for the group and is always popular with visitors.

The History group is in temporary suspension pending an assessment by Helen Tranter, who has done great work on history and the gardens, as to whether she can continue in this role. A new development is the Community Garden proposal which will further expand our reach into the Robertson village and continue our role as a broad community resource. Neil finished by expressing his best wishes to the next committee and by directing particular appreciation to Ian for his great work on the gardens with his tireless wife Sandra and to Anne for running a tight financial ship and being a great events organiser. He personally had really appreciated his time as President and as a committee member and left with a great feeling of personal satisfaction that the station precinct was being passed on to the next executive committee in good shape. He noted that he would not be standing again as he and Marion would be doing extensive caravanning next year but would be an ordinary member and would help when available.

Report moved by Neil, seconded by Rona. Accepted unanimously.

4. **Treasurer and Public Officer's report for the past year** –

Anne Wilson tabled an annual statement which showed that RHRS was in a sound financial position with net assets of \$18,847.26 to hand. The main points Anne drew attention to were that income and expenditure over the year had been roughly equal with outgoings of approximately \$9,000 and a similar income which was a most creditable achievement considering the negative impact of Covid on fund-raising activities. Capital grants are most important for a group like ours because it enables large projects to be undertaken which our fund-raising alone would never cover. We have enough in reserve to continue financially for several years even with reduced activities due to our small core group. The budget though was expected to increase now that it is policy to hire paid workers such as Graham Grootemaat in the garden and Kiri as a regular cleaner.

Report moved by Anne, seconded by Angus. Accepted unanimously.

5. **Gallery report** – Anne Wilson

It was a subdued year Anne advised with the Heritage Art prize cancelled. The floral art show from last October generated \$600 and covered its costs. The benefits of the art shows are that it broadens our appeal and provides a good venue for local art. Next April it was hoped to host an exhibition using material from the upcoming REPS booklet on the local environment, which is a worthy project

Report moved by Anne, seconded by Rona. Accepted unanimously.

6. **Grounds & Gardens Report** – Ian Wallace

Attention was drawn to the report already circulated the main points of which Ian said, were the importance of the group of volunteers to the regular working bees which kept the garden and grounds healthy and presentable. Particularly, the watering using Anne's water tank during the drought as well as regular hand-watering by volunteers. Calls via village news and Facebook page, for assistance from the village community had resulted in extra hands to help particularly with weeding and gardening.

The inability of the Corrective Services crew to do groundwork due to Covid-19 restrictions meant that Neil had been doing mowing using the RHRS ride-on. Special maintenance, such as heavy pruning, may have to be done by paid labour in future, or if the Covid restrictions continue for a lengthy period.

Disposal of green waste and the use of herbicides for weed control were issues for the next season Ian said. He indicated that he and Sandra would need a good level of support in the coming year or they may have to withdraw because the sheer amount of work required on the gardens and grounds would be too much. However, he looked forward to a good season particularly with the Waratah week hopefully being a success as a fund-raiser.

Ian moved, Anne seconded that the report be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

7. **RHRS Vice-President and Secretary Report** – Steve Carey on behalf of RHRS Management Committee

Steve echoed comments by others of the effects of COVID on RHRS functioning, it being a difficult year for all voluntary groups such as RHRS. The period up to Xmas was reasonably normal from an administrative, web tech and public outreach point

of view. Although *Cockatoo Run* trains were coming to the Highlands on a more-or-less monthly basis, once the Waratah week was over, things were fairly quiet. Publicity in the village news and Facebook page was useful but loop train numbers dropped considerably. There has been reduced activity on the website and publicity front. It's been good to see informative articles by Neil and Ian in our local news but there has been a dearth of train activity due to the virtual shutdown of the heritage rail sector for several months

Steve said he and Rona would like to thank RHRS for the camaraderie and sense of achievement our involvement over the last 15 or more years have brought into our lives. We will not be standing for the committee again but will remain as ordinary members and occasional volunteers. It has been a valuable part of our lives and we've made lifelong friends through our association with RHRS. We wish the new committee all the best for the coming year. There is much to be proud of about the achievements of our little group over the years and long may it continue.

Report moved by Steve, seconded by Neil. Accepted unanimously.

8. Election of the Committee for 2020-2021

The President declared all 2019/2020 Office-bearers' positions vacant and handed over the Chair to Returning Officer Peter Glass. The President thanked everyone for their reports and involvement and declared the present committee at an end and asked the returning officer to assume control of the meeting and ask for new office bearers to be nominated.

9. Returning Officer Peter Glass then proceeded to preside over election of office-bearers for 2020/2021 as follows:

- President. Ian Wallace nominated by Neil, seconded Rona. Ian accepted. No other nominations. Elected unanimously. Peter declared Ian new President.
- Vice-president. Rod Visman nominated by Ian, seconded Neil. Rod accepted. No other nominations. Elected unanimously. Peter declared Rod new Vice-president.
- Treasurer. Anne Wilson nominated by Ian, seconded Neil. Accepted. No other nominations. Elected unanimously. Peter declared Anne new Treasurer.
- Secretary. Angus Webster nominated by Ian seconded Anne. Accepted. No other nominations. Elected unanimously. Peter declared Angus new Secretary.

Peter led the election to appoint up to four additional persons to the RHRS Management Committee.

- Committee Member – Noel Rothwell nominated by Anne, seconded Neil. Accepted.
- Committee Member – Tony McCoy nominated by Neil, seconded Noel, Accepted.
- Committee Member. Peter Glass nominated by Peter, seconded Anne. Accepted.
- Committee Member. . No other nominations. Position remains vacant. Peter declared Noel, Tony and Peter elected automatically. Agreed unanimously.

10. Nominate coordinators/ leaders for the following areas of responsibility:

- Safety
- Station and heritage train visits
- History
- Publicity & Promotions
- Gallery
- Website and RHRS E--Bulletin

- Buildings & Maintenance
- Gardens & Grounds maintenance
- Model railway group
- Events coordination
- Social coordination
- Membership & recruitment

It was agreed that the new committee would handle these various essential tasks on an as-required basis using resources available over the next 12 months.

Returning Officer Peter said that the Heritage Railway precinct was very important to our town and a valued part of village life. He was happy to be on the new committee and wished the departing members all the best.

11. Returning Officer then handed over Chair to newly elected President for 2020/2021, Ian Wallace.

12. Other business and questions.

The new President addressed the meeting about the future. Ian thanked the returning officer for conducting the election. He said that his aim was to do the best he could with a small and ageing executive committee over the coming year. It was important to use resources wisely and work within the capabilities of the group. Hopefully calls though the village news and Facebook page would result in some new faces during the year to bolster those elected. These avenues would also be used during the year to keep a visible presence for the railway group in the public mind.

The matters of importance ahead were the completion of the signage project with Neil and consultant architect Peter Campbell and ensuring that we remain an operational railway station open to receive *The Cockatoo Run* and any other heritage trains. He welcomed the modellers for another year and emphasised again how necessary it was to get support from the village and others to keep the gardens in trim. The community garden group may also be a welcome help in this regard he said. Another matter to address was the need for a succession plan so that the railway complex could be passed on as a going concern. It was encouraging that there were sufficient finances to enable several more years of operation.

Ian welcomed the new committee to the task ahead. He expressed his thanks for the sterling work done by Neil, Steve and Rona over their many years on the committee and wished them well in the future.

The issue of the website was raised. Rona said it was a Weebly based site and she would be happy to show any interested member the ropes and in the meantime, to keep it functioning well. Ian said he appreciated this.

13. Meeting close. Ian declared the meeting closed at 4.25pm and invited attendees to enjoy the refreshments