

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL AGM OF THE HUNTER GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION

The inaugural AGM of the HGPA was held on 29 July 2015 at 62 Denison St, Hamilton, commencing at 6.45 pm, with Tony Isaac as Chairperson.

Apologies were received from:

Chris Boyle, Tony Plummer, Thais Miles, Clara Jiminez, Steve Golding, Elizabeth Kaiko, Melissa McQuillan, Flor Albo Soto-Rodriguez, Elaine Stafford, Jane Geary, Robin Gordon, Peter Miles, Annette Carruthers, Kathryn Martin, Graeme Choat, Belinda Guest, Zinny McTackett, Peter McGeoch, Fiona Boyd, Peter Hopkins.

Members present were:

Ben Ewald, David Smith, Fiona Van Leeuwen, Robyn Fried, Anna Kelly, Richard Terry, Steve De Lyall, Marie-Ann Hockings, Caitlin Raschke, Mark Foster, Lee Fong, Tony Isaac, Renee Harkin, Margaret Lynch, Ben Sekold, Lesley Dunkley, Michael Swanson, Lucy Van Baalen, Karla Raja, Colin Pearce, Loius Anderson, Bronwyn Anderson, Sunita Ubeja, Manjit Abeja, John Goswell, Rita Singh.

Chairperson's report, from Tony Isaac

From the humble beginnings of meetings in Dr Lee Fong's lounge room over beer and pizza, a handful of local GPs concerned about advocating for general practice issues to local stakeholders such as Hunter Medicare Local, Hunter New England Health and others, The Hunter GP association was born.

The organization was launched amid the storm of controversy caused by the 2014 budget Medicare changes in January 2015. The timing of the launch served to galvanise the local GPs, but posed enormous resourcing challenges to the fledging organization. Regardless, the HGPA was able to build its membership, representing local general practice in the local and national media and the profession more widely, with representation by members at senate hearings in Canberra and in the Central Coast. Representatives met with every local federal members as well as a number of state members. Dr Van Leeuwen was able to speak directly with the health minister at one stage. Our role in the campaign to challenge the 2014 budget measures did not go unnoticed by national lobbying bodies like the RACGP and the AMA, both of whom made trips to Newcastle as a result.

The organisation's website was launched and has been expertly updated by the enormous effort of Dr Lee Fong who deserves a particular mention and much of our thanks. The Charlestown network also deserves particular mention for initiating a very successful meeting with local GPs which they kindly allowed the organization to use as its launch pad.

Their Google group has since become an active medium for the raising, sharing and discussing of local GP issues. Particular mention and thanks go to Dr Colin Pearce and Dr Richard Terry.

There have been partial wins but much remains to be done to reestablish the morale and standing of the profession within the community and government. It has been an honour to have held this position and I wish Dr Fiona Van Leeuwin all the best in moving the organization forward.

Secretary's report, from Lee Fong

HGPA membership is now in excess of 200, and that there are more than 20 new visitors to the website each day.

Treasurer's report, from David Smith

The sole source of income for the Association has been 22 donations from members. Less bank fees, this amounts to \$3,540.57. There has been no expenditure.

Election of honorary office bearers

There being only one nomination for the position of Chairperson, Fiona Van Leeuwin was declared Chairperson, and she chaired the remainder of the meeting.

There being only one nomination for the position of Vice Chairperson, Steve De Lyall was declared the Vice Chairperson.

There had been only one nomination for Secretary, Lee Fong, but he withdrew in favour of spending more time on maintaining the Association's website. It was, therefore, unanimously decided by the meeting to amalgamate the positions of Secretary and Treasurer, and there being only one nomination for treasurer, David Smith was declared Secretary/Treasurer.

Adoption of the constitution

A motion that 'The Constitution of the Hunter General Practitioners Association', as circulated, be adopted was moved by Mark Foster and seconded by Lesley Dunkley. The motion was carried unanimously.

Appointment of the Management Committee

Applications for membership of the Management were sought, and the following members were elected unanimously:

Marie-Ann Hockings, Richard Terry, Colin Pearce, Lee Fong, Michael Swanson, John Goswell.

General Business

Discussions were held concerning the importance of the Association's independence, especially in relation to its future funding, membership fees, its future directions and projects, and the impending launch of an email address separate from the 'googlegroups' facility. No motions were put.

Members present were urged to email the management committee with suggestions for future activities or for the discussion of issues affecting general practice in the Hunter.

The meeting was closed at ***pm.