



THE ANU OBSERVER

## **General Meeting 2019-05-29**

Minutes

Location: Square One

Opened: 1821

## **Item 1: Meeting Opens and Apologies**

### 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Delivered by Eliza

### 1.2 Apologies

None Received.

**Procedural motion** to consider Item 5 next

**Moved by Jessica Whiting**

**Passes unanimously.**

## **Item 5: Items for Resolution**

5.1 Motion to adopt the following amendments and additions to the ANU Observer Constitution, to come into effect on 1 December and subsequent to ANU Council Ratification at their next meeting (Appendix F)

Jason (mover): You can find the amendments attached. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to write an explanatory memorandum, so I'll go through it orally.

Jason: What this does is that this both changes Observer's governance and its operations. Our board, presently called the Council, is constituted by representatives from throughout the association. [Explains who's on Council under current constitution] We have two teams - News and Digital. Unfortunately, Observer's makeup changes considerably year-to-year, we're still pretty young. So prescribing two teams is unnecessarily restrictive.

So what we're doing is having the News team, plus other teams. How that'll work is that we can have whatever teams we need (Digital, Finance, etc.).

**Procedural motion** to extend Jason's meeting time by 10 minutes (or until he stops).

**Moved by Jess Whiting.**

**Motion passes, 27 in favour, 3 against.**

Jason: Previously, Digital was a residual category for anything that 'wasn't news'. This allows us to break that up in a more efficient fashion among the newly created teams.

Jessica (seconder): More voices in the room for the Board is better, and will reduce strain on digital and news.

**Procedural motion** to suspend standing orders to allow 12 minutes of question time.  
**Moved by Joel Baker.**  
**Passes unanimously.**

Questions:

Joel: 6.2, the description of how the board will be laid out moving forward. How will that work this year?

Jason: We'll see that this will come into effect on 1st December and subject to ANU council ratification. Once we have our elections for the executive, you'll have 1 or more executive in each team; each team will then choose a representative to sit on Council.

Joel: Can you explain 6.2.1B?

Jason: One of the philosophies of Observer is that it's driven by the News team. Hence, the News team having a large share of the governing body is important. If we have 2 teams, you have 2 News Team representatives. If you have 3 teams, you'll have 3 News Team representatives. This means the News team has 50%-1 representation.

Joel: Doesn't 6.55 seem problematic?

Jason: This means that we can't have Council members, in a situation of division, can't have a meeting at their house at 1am to prevent opposition. It does mean that someone could veto every motion for a meeting, but we're relying on good faith here.

Joel: Is the process for electing the Chair elsewhere in the Constitution?

Jason: We have standing orders, and it's adequately described in the Constitution.

Skanda: Am I correctly understanding that the Council can create new teams by vote?

Jason: One thing these changes prescribe is that there's a 'Teams' regulation. This will determine how many Teams there are. Regulations can only be moved by GM, so this stops Council stacking itself.

Standing orders resume due to no further questions.

**Motion to amend the Constitution moved by Jason Pover**  
**Seconded by Jessica Whiting**  
**Motion passes with one abstention and all the rest in favour.**

**Procedural motion** to consider 3.5 now

**Moved by Jason Pover**

**Motion carries unanimously**

**Item 3: Reports and Matters Arising**

3.5 Treasurer's Report (Appendix E)

Jules: Taken as Read, I would like to thank Council for their help

Eliza: Questions?

Eliaz: Seeing none, who will move that this be accepted?

Kon: me

**Motion** to accept the Treasurer's report

**Moved by Konstantinos Katsanis**

**Carries with one abstention.**

**Item 2: Minutes from the Previous Meeting including Matters Arising**

2.1 Minutes from the Previous Meeting

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cB6ArTRtMhVg8yt3r91NeW4xCW0UyRkFcSoEnYxOO9M/edit?usp=sharing>

Eliza: can I have a mover?

**Moved by Jessica**

**Motion passes with two abstentions - Ebe and Howard.**

**Item 3: Reports and Matters Arising**

3.1 Report of the Chair of the Council (Appendix A)

Eliza passes the Chair to Jess.

Eliza: Just want to update on the office saga, got an update, got a security code for building, needs to be looked at again. Still not sure what it will cost. Love ANU. Taken as read for the rest

Jess: Questions?

Skanda: ssaf issues

Eliza: the loss of Richard Baker has caused issues, no new one yet. Luckily Jules is now more around the situation. Hopefully we won't be late. Its been tricky, we're the first new org to get it, been a slog.

Jess: seeing no questions, move to a vote.

**Motion** to accept the Chair's report

**Moved by Felix**

**Passes with one abstention**

Chair passes back to Eliza

3.2 Report of the Chair of the Editorial Board (Appendix B)

Adelle: Taken as Read.

Eliza: Questions?

Ebe: less reporting, why?

Adelle: Ophel trial was an issue. Also a whole lot of new people, a large number of people coming in without experience.

Ebe: why prioritise Ophel?

Adelle: the assumption was that we would continue covering them, given we did last year.

Howard: ANU Media relationship?

Adeele: we have tried to be good and reasonable when they are without allowing for their interfering.

Skanda: new hires?

Adelle: they're excellent so far.

**Motion** to accept the Editorial Board's report

**Moved by Sofia**

**Passes unanimously.**

3.3 Report of the Digital Team (Appendix C)

Kon: hello everyone, report taken as read, any questions?

Ebe: what steps have been taken for integration?

Kon: first of all, we hired more people. To deal with shortages that existed. We had more leave. Comparing with last year we have produced more video content. Started using the snapchat and instagram again. There have been changes this year.

**Motion** to accept the Digital Editor's report  
**Moved by Hayley Hands**  
**Passes unanimously.**

### 3.4 Secretary's Report (Appendix D)

Jason: Take what's written as read. Address what Ebe said, constitutional changes will help somewhat. I remember your report, and being split up the editors. It seems like splitting it up, it makes teams easier. If we don't have people, we don't have to fill the teams. I'm resigning. I've been with observer a long time. It has informed me as a person, and i'm thankful to be part of it. I would like to thank Eliza and michael and everyone else who was involved early. I'm a bit sad to go, but new opportunities arise and I have contributed enough.

Lachy: about the resignation, what is the third reason?

Jason: was i vague? What I was going to say, I was going to do things next semester that may not be compatible with Observer.

**Motion** to accept the Secretary's report  
**Moved by Felix**  
**Passes unanimously.**

## **Item 4: Elections**

### 4.1 Election of News Editor

**Eliza:** some context, council can increase the number of editors, we need more than 3, we're going to 4. So we need elections. No nominations in writing, any nominations from the floor?

Anthony: sure.

Eliza: any others? None.

Anthony: My work stands for itself.

Eliza: anyone else want to nominate? \*no one else does\*

**Procedural motion** to suspend standing orders to allow for questions

**Moved by Skanda Panditharatne**  
**Passes with one against, all the rest in favour.**

Skanda: how are you going to balance things re life balance?

Anthony: I think I'm already on top of things. If I'm on top of things I'll be fine.

Eliza: Eben (Returning Officer) needs to declare the winner.

Eben: I declare Anthony the winner.

**Motion to accept the Returning Officer's declaration**  
**Moved by Konstantinos Katsanis**  
**Seconded by Jason Pover**  
**Passes with one vote against**

**Item 6: Items for Discussion**

*Nil*

**Item 7: Notices of Motions**

*Nil*

**Item 8: Other Business**

Eliza: I have some, I pass the chair to Jess. So technically we need to open noms for Arbiters. We can go up to 5. The arbitration panel can not be a current officer.

Jason Pover asks if he is eligible to nominate.

Jess: if you want to know how we get paid, this is how, we have rules, people can dissent it. Arbitration manages that.

Eliza: Jason is not eligible. Sorry Jason, you can't run, seeing no other nominations, I hold this over.

**Item 9: Date of next meeting and Close**

The next meeting of the Members of The ANU Observer will be held in Semester 2, 2019.

Meeting closed: 6:56pm

# Appendix A: Council Chair's Report

**Eliza Croft**

If 2017 was Observer's breakthrough year, and 2018 was its year of growth and expansion, I would say 2019 so far has been about consolidation. That doesn't seem as exciting as starting or expanding, but it's just as important. I think we've really settled into our role on campus, and worked to ensure this can continue into the future. As Chair, I've been involved in general team management, our SSAF bid and governance, and organising an office.

## **The Team**

The team has grown to a good size. We naturally list some people between 2018 and 2019, but had a lot of new hires over Term 1. I'm also happy that all of our Elected Officials have stayed on so far - student organisations always struggle to keep leaders, especially in stressful roles like that of our Elected Officials. I thank everyone in the team for their dedication and enthusiasm so far this year.

Last year, the 2019 Council members attended a governance training session. This was valuable, and prompted us to hold a strategic planning session at the start of this year. Team members were also invited to attend various University training sessions relating to wellbeing, and dealing with sensitive topics. These were useful both for team management responsibilities and for our coverage. I am grateful to ANU for providing these opportunities.

I'd like to thank Jess for spearheading reflection sessions after Term 1. The Editors and Council had one session each, and it was a great chance to look at what we did well and what could be improved.

## **SSAF**

I'm happy to say that we had a quite significant increase in our SSAF funding this year (about 30%). This is especially significant because ANU's cap on student numbers means the SSAF pool itself has stayed the same.

We did have some difficulty obtaining our SSAF, as we had last year. I think this year's issues can be, at least in part, attributed to the loss of Richard Baker - it meant we have not had anyone specific to direct questions to. However, we ultimately got our money in April, and we had a buffer of unspent money from last year which tied us over in the meantime.

## **Office Space**

I've spent a lot of time over the past six months sorting out our office space. Having an office would be invaluable to on the organisation, giving us the ability to have meetings and events without disturbing others, and giving us a place to store out equipment. We first heard that this was a possibility around October last year. In Movember, we were told this would be where Student Experience and Career Development was, under Davey Lodge.



However, despite extensive follow-up, we then heard very little in terms of concrete detail. We received an estimated cost of \$12000 at the start of this year, but then never received the promised draft contract. Finally, earlier this month I received a response from the University, apologising for the delay and saying we would have more information by the end of May. I hope to be able to provide an update at this meeting.

### **Constitutional Changes**

I've also been involved in preparing the constitutional changes proposed at this meeting, and I thank Jason for his hard work on this. I'll let him speak or to the amendments, but in short, I think they will be very helpful moving forward.

# Appendix B: Editorial Board's Report

Adelle Millhouse

Observer has published 44 articles since the beginning of the year, with 38 of these being since the start of semester. This has included a number of liveblogs and analysis pieces, in addition to regular news updates.

Although an impressive effort, we rarely achieved our KPI of 5 articles a week in addition to the weekly catch up. There were a number of contributing factors to this, including the resources we put into the Ophel Trial, time spent in training new hires, and reporters failing to meet deadlines. We made four new hires for the news team this semester. Though obviously an important part of sustaining the organisation, this hiring took up a large part of my time for the first half of semester. All the new hires have published at least one article at this point, and have really become part of the team.

As a result of these new hires, we have been able to decrease the number of articles written by our executive team. This is in line with our KPIs established in January. The most significant executive contributions have been to liveblogs. This may be expected as new hires learn the art of publishing on a short timeframe, but we have had a significant problem with getting reporter to attend events such as SRC. Although we cannot afford to pay reporters nearly enough to have a monopoly on their time, attending events such as SRC and Clubs Council are important for understanding ANUSA's political landscape. Liveblogging aside, it is also incredibly difficult to write about events you didn't attend. I would love to have more reporters attending ANUSA events next term.

Another major problem we have encountered this semester is a failure of some reporters to meet article deadlines. Again, Observer does not expect to have a monopoly on reporter time, but we do expect communication. Editors are not going to be angry if your assignment is due two days earlier than you thought, or you've come down with a cold. We are going to be angry if your article is three days late, we don't know why, and you're not responding to our messages. At least one article has had to be re-assigned twice due to reporters failing to meet deadline, and failing to communicate with editors about this in a timely manner. Fortunately, it's a pretty evergreen story, but it's still symptomatic of a larger issue.

We've tried to address this issue by allowing reporters to have agency in choosing their own stories, and creating an estimation of the time each story will take to write and edit. Although this is good, in that it allows reporters to choose stories they both care about and have the time to complete, it has been very disappointing to me personally to see people opt for the catch up in the first instance. The catch up is fine, but it is not what the organisation is about, nor what reporters should be signing up for. The advertised time commitment per week of a reporter is 8-10 hours a week. The catch up takes two. The catch up is a great option for someone with an abnormally busy week, but could realistically be completed in addition to another article within even the low end of the advertised timescale. We also have a problem in ensuring engagement with the organisation when reporters are unable to make our Monday news meetings. It would be great if we could have better engagement on the Slack to combat this issue.

The Ophel Trial looms large in our work this semester. Though undoubtedly a valuable piece of reporting, the Trial was a huge drain on time and emotional resources for our team. Reporting required the presence of a team member at the court for most of the day, in addition to time spent writing up and editing the liveblog. Our weekly publication numbers dropped significantly for the duration of the trial, reflecting the resources we poured into reporting. I am overall very happy with the coverage we got out, and believe it to have been a worthwhile endeavour.

The Ophel Trial began the first of many negative experiences with ANU Media. Since this point, ANU Media has attempted to be very controlling of our coverage, and has made unreasonable demands on our time. They are slow to respond to emails, and this has delayed the publication of some articles. They are also very fond of phone calls, which is not very Millennial of them. Unfortunately, ANU Media remains our only path to getting any kind of information from the ANU itself, and is often the only corroboration we can get on student rumours. We are, unfortunately, stuck with them.

I'd like to conclude with a big thank you to our whole team – reporters, editors, and digital. Get excited for election season!!!

# Appendix C: Digital Team's Report

Konstantinos Katsanis

This Semester has been difficult for the Digital team, as it faced lots of challenges. We started with a medium sized team, that eventually seemed inadequate on undertaking tasks due to the unavailability of its members. We decided to increase our numbers by hiring more people, but we only received applications for photographers and one graphic designer, in the beginning of the Semester. After interviews were conducted, the members chosen to join our team were given couple of trials. While they had completed their trials, some of them left after couple of weeks due to personal or commitment reasons. Other members (including new) never managed to undertake more work, and therefore I needed to have a discussion with them. Two approved members got removed from our organisation, while others are on hold due to not being able to be reached or due to health issues. I am aiming to have a conversation with these individuals before the exam period ends. Meanwhile, our interviews for videographer applicants have been completed and we will send emails with the outcomes before the end of next week. Our methods on hiring new people have changed, and a major change is to give them more trials than just one, over a prolonged period of time.

Despite some of the problems we faced we managed to produce lots of content and do new things. We maintained our consistency with the 3-4 major livestreams/recordings each term. That included four SRCs, one ANUSA OGM and two Clubs Council Meetings in a Semester. We produced more video content and we started using YouTube once again, after a year. The first clip was about the opening of the Kambri precinct, Market Day and the last day of Bus 3. We also started livestreaming guest lectures, such as the 'LRSJ Talk with George Newhouse. Refugees: Duty of Care'. We also updated some of our graphics for the Weekly Catch-Up and our graphic designer has been trying different models for future purposes. Furthermore, we published our first ever 'Term in Photos' album, which displayed photos, especially unpublished ones, taken by all our digital team members. The photos include coverage of some of the most major events that took place in a term. The album will be getting published in the beginning of the term after the target one.

Other changes that took place included the appointment of Stavros Dimos as the Digital Team Deputy, a person who can provide assistance and advice to the Digital Editor if needed. That was created in need for me to discuss digital-related things with some other member in the team, in confidentiality. Furthermore, members of the

Digital Team are not obliged to attend Monday meetings, but they are encouraged if they wish to do so. We started meeting up every 2-3 weeks and attendance is mandatory. So far, it seems to be working ok. Most of the communication happens in Slack.

Lastly, we aim to expand the digital team, next semester, by producing more video and photography content than ever before and try new things. We have already started this task by interviewing videographers, as I believe that it is more important to get a good number of video makers over photographers because videos and livestreams require the most time commitment. I am also planning to provide photography and video training to everyone in the team. That will cover use of the equipment, composition and editing.

Konstantinos Katsanis  
ANU Observer Digital Editor  
24/05/2019

# Appendix D: Secretary's Report

**Jason Pover**

It has been a relatively quiet year so far in my portfolio and thus my report will be brief.

## **Constitutional Reform**

This has been my biggest contribution this year, and has been challenging on a variety of levels.

The administrative burden on constitutional amendment for a Student Organisation, particularly with regard to the various levels of consultation required by the ANU, is significant. This is further compounded by the tendency of the administration to ignore my emails.

Drafting it was challenging, especially in the tight timeframe necessitated by the ANU Council protocol. It is a complex alteration and was one of the most difficult pieces of governance work I have done, but quite a rewarding one.

## **Meetings**

Meetings during my term have been minuted and made publicly available on the meetings page on the website. I'd remind anyone reading them and thinking Observer has odd priorities that Council is not an operational body.

## **The Role**

I have encountered significant issues with the role of secretary in Observer. The Secretary and Treasurer both suffer from being outside of the operational team and therefore feeling not really part of the organisation. This is added to the issues of administrative compliance required of student organisations, but further strained in Observer because of the peculiar lack of institutional knowledge and support that would exist in ANUSA, PARSA and to a lesser extent ANUSM.

## **Resignation**

I am Resigning effective COB on the 31st of this month. This was a hard decision but was founded on three grounds.

The first was I am personally spread quite thin at the moment, overcommitment is something I'm sure many of you understand, and something I struggle with. I really need more time to study.

The second is that for reasons as set out above in relation to the problems with the role of Observer Secretary. There are systemic issues with the position of Secretary in observer. I feel part of the organisation but not really, divorced from its soul, which is news. I hope some other more bushy tailed young governance person can make a better go of it.

# Appendix E: Treasurer's Report

**Julian Lee**

Good evening, friends. I'm here to provide the end-of-year report for the ANU Observer, as the current Observer Treasurer.

We've had a productive and busy year here at Observer. Unfortunately, the year had a rocky start. While our SSAF funding was greater than in 2018, the entire increase is required to cover the costs of our new office. On the upside, we have a new office at UniLodge! We hope to be moving in soon.

Further, there were a variety of delays in receiving our SSAF money from the ANU, attributable to internal issues and a variety of difficulties communicating with the university administration. Fortunately, we've now received our money and I'm looking forward to putting your SSAF dollars to work, and particularly, to moving into the new office.

Looking forward, we're about to launch into the process of drafting SSAF bids. The process of consulting on priorities with the team has already begun, and we're hoping for a good result. We're still a young organisation, but we're doing a good job of making every dollar work. Whatever the outcome of the SSAF process.

Finally, a little restructuring is underway. I'm in the process of trying to arrange for an Assistant Treasurer who will be able to assist with SSAF bids and take up my position next year on the Board.

Thank you to everyone on the Observer team for their support this year, and I look forward to a productive Semester 2.

## **Appendix F - The ANU Observer Constitution and Amendments**

The existing Constitution can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NtZP3jXo-6jXdlaWscFacvdNKDDa8Tk9/view>

The Amendments can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IB3zTtThHffK7eERO2OUX4RBxasXroFYjOoqvXu\\_IK4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IB3zTtThHffK7eERO2OUX4RBxasXroFYjOoqvXu_IK4/edit?usp=sharing)