



# THE ANU OBSERVER

## Meeting of The ANU Observer Board

Date: 5/8/2020

Open of Meeting: 1704

### Item 1 - Attendance and Apologies

**Present:** Konstantine, Sam, Angus, Anthony, Hayley (In-person) and Tristan (Zoom)

**Absent:**

### Item 2 - Acknowledgement of Country

By Konstantinos

### Item 3 - Previous Action Items

**8.1 Actionable:** Sam looking into MHFA training and use of Phone.

Sam: MHFA looked at what they've got available, doesn't look like there's anything for the rest of the year but I have sent them an email. We need to grab a new sim card for the phone.

Kon: My big idea for training is to coordinate with Woroni to potentially do a combined thing.

**8.2 Actionable:** Hayley, Tristan and Sam to organise Bush Week/Open Day livestream/office tour/Q&A.

**8.3 Ordering Shirts**

### Item 4 - Reports

**Chair Report: Konstantine Katsanis**

*(Received late with apologies)*

It has not been as much of a busy period for the Chair, as much as it has been for the Finance Executive.

I have sent an email to Anastasia, the executive officer to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience) [DVC(SUE)] Professor Ian Anderson. She has taken over Luby's role, and I am awaiting a response.

I have informed some officers that I am trying to put a strong focus on my studies for this semester. As a result, I will not be as responsive neither in Slack nor facebook between 10:00-17:00. Most Observer work will be done either before or after those hours. If there is an emergency, or an approval for a payment, please call me on my phone.

Lastly, I would like to clarify a few things about my activity at Observer. I've been working for as many hours as the role requires me to complete. If sometimes I seem inactive, it is because there is literally

nothing to do. Most of the role of the Public Officer is sending and replying to emails, acting as a contact between the ANU Observer and other stakeholders. Chair, on the other hand, is involved in governance and is responsible in supervising Board meetings. Governance things extend to more than in-person meetings; they can be an online conversation with the Secretary or the Web Executive, for instance. Secondly, it is a volunteer role, and work is going to be done when work is required to be done. Although I personally do not think an allowance is required, the workload can extremely fluctuate one week from 2 hours to 6 hours the next.

Chair passes to Sam. Konstantine is invited to give his report.

Kon: I'll take it as read then.

Moved by Hayley, seconded by Angus. Passes unanimously.

### **Finance Executive Report: Konstantine Katsanis**

*(Received late with apologies)*

Similarly to before, as a Treasurer, it has been busy, especially with finding and providing the documentation the auditing company has requested. As I had mentioned in a previous report, they came in touch about a month ago. To provide a short history, a report from 20/06/2019 provides evidence that Jules and Eliza were working on the topic at the time of that report. To my knowledge, receipts, invoices and expenditure accounts were not handed in until 17/10/2019. That can be normal, especially if the auditing company does not respond immediately. However, I had to send them a follow-up email in December and I was informed that they were going to deal with it in the first year. I contacted them sometime in March or April, but I did not receive a response until a second follow-up email in June. Again, they only contacted us in July. The auditing process since then seems to be progressing fast enough, although they have been constantly requesting for more documentation. Lastly, and most problematically, we have not been invoiced. This has to happen soon because we need to create and submit a credit note along with our next invoice.

From their emails, I was made aware of the following things:

1. Our financial year ends on November 30, and not December 31 as Jules had told me in person and as it was written in his handover. That means that any expenses have to be made before this date.
2. We will have a clear idea of how much we have not spent by that time, and therefore we would be able to create a credit note immediately afterwards. That would make the job easier, as a credit note would be able to be submitted at the same time as an invoice to the ANU.
3. We should ask to be invoiced before November 30. Otherwise, we can assume that all the 'Auditing' line item would be exhausted.
4. They asked whether we have a 'Fixed Asset Register' and an 'Asset Management Policy'. We do have something to compensate for that for the digital equipment, and that is the 'Equipment Use Policy', however I am not sure what the other policy would entail. We should probably create those two things, as we now have assets, such as digital equipment (cameras, tripods, computer) and office furniture. Although not a priority at the moment, insurance for equipment would also be something to consider.
5. The way we fund NUS is a mess. The money for a particular year's conference come from the budget of the year after.

I am planning to come in touch with the Woroni Treasurer. I would like to discuss with them 4) and 5), as the NUS was a joint bid. Secondly, I would like to ask what policy they follow for their assets. Thirdly, I would encourage the reporters to come back to me by next Wednesday about any collaboration they

would like to see with Woroni; would you like to bid for some shared training and NUS? I highly encourage us to provide a joint bid, as this looks good to the ANU and it would increase our chances of actually getting some money for these line items

We also entered an agreement with UniLodge to pay subsidised lease for August and September, 50% off, and to pay no rent for July. In total, we saved \$1,721.20. We have a lot of unspent money for the office, so we should probably start spending it.

Finally, I contacted Anastasia, the executive officer to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience) [DVC(SUE)] Professor Ian Anderson. I am waiting on a response, but I am hoping we would get informed soon about SSAF round dates.

Actionables for me:

- Arrange a meeting with Anastasia and discuss a reserve plan.
- Create a SSAF guide
- Buy digital equipment for F5
- Buy shirts

The next Board meeting will be heavily SSAF-related, however, I am happy to meet with elected officers outside that meeting. I want everyone to come up with something by the next SSAF-related meeting.

Kon: Take it also as read, there's a lot of stuff.

Hayley: Could you send me the auditing email.

Kon: It was just a lot of information and by itself it can be confusing.

Hayley: How did you go with receipts?

Kon: Found them and scanned most of them. I don't know how to explain [to auditors] transfers for t-shirts. The NUS receipt is missing but I gave them the tickets which is hopefully enough. But yeah, it's good to keep track of all invoices and receipts and for people to send them to me.

Tristan: Are we saving those receipts anywhere in particular?

Kon: We have a receipt folder in Google Drive but there are a couple and they are mixed up so it is best to send them to me. If you have a physical copy put it in the draw under the computer desk.

Moved by Angus, seconded by Hayley. Passes unanimously.

Chair passes back to Kon.

### **Secretary Report: Hayley Hands**

Since our last meeting I have had a busy few weeks. I have done the following:

- Written a document regarding the CEO and Community Executive role(s). I have added an agenda item for the next strategic meeting at which I would like to discuss this as one of the items. This document was posted in the Board channel, I would recommend having a look if you are interested as it will quite heavily influence the way we work.
- The Community Executive role is of particular interest to me, as they would take over some of the 'odd jobs' that people have been perhaps a bit reluctant to do as they don't sit clearly within a current team. E.g: Internal communication/HR & dispute resolution, marketing, assistance with hiring, internal and external events (O-Week, socials), maintaining the office space, etc.

- I envision the CEO as being slightly less work but still important. It was a recommendation we received during government training as well as a suggestion in our General Meeting. A CEO would help us a lot with staying on track with KPIs and inter team communication, as they would sit on Board to report about this kind of thing but would be more involved in guiding Observer's operations.
- Organised the Bush Week Livestream event - Next time I would like to see some more initiative from the news/visual team in organising/helping to plan this. As Secretary, content is not my responsibility and whilst I am always happy to help out it was difficult to get a response sometimes.
- Deep cleaned the office and set up additional COVID measures (and put in some cute decorations). A huge thanks to Konstantine and Angus for helping out with this. I have added an agenda item about a cleaning roster. I am unsure whether this should include just the executive or all officers, but it would be great to get a consistent schedule so it isn't such a big job next time.
- Printed our policies and placed them in the wall folders- Some of the fonts are a bit weird but it will be nice to have them there for reference.
- Got up to date with providing minutes to Angus, they should all be on the website now. Apologies for falling behind whilst other matters were more pressing.

The next things I am going to do:

- Begin the policy review I was talking about during my last report. In printing our policies I noticed at least 5 or 6 which will require some minor changes.
- Plan for both a strategic and operational meeting to address our progress and see where we can improve both from a governance and operational perspective. In addition to this, I would like to re-evaluate the way we hold Board/Operational meetings. As was also suggested at governance training, we should not be having as many Board meetings as we are currently having. Other organisations, e.g PARSA, hold around 4-6 a year plus some other planning meetings. In my view, there should be a Content Executive meeting (Web, News & Visual) fortnightly to plan operations, and a Board meeting once a month or less. We can discuss this more at the meeting (we did last time but due to the circumstances of this semester we had to meet more) but I would really like to look into this to separate the Board from the content as much as we are able.
- I would like to organise a social now that more people are back in Canberra. Due to restrictions we would need to maintain social distancing but a chill office hangout would be really nice before the Semester gets crazy and election season starts.

From a general perspective, now that some of the stressful stuff is out of the way and we are back from break we should be ramping up again. I am looking forward to seeing a few more people being able to use the office space.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions for anything governance related. I am always keen for other people to be involved.

Kon: When you mentioned having less Board meetings what did you mean?

Hayley: Would like to talk more about it in strategic meetings. I ultimately think we discuss too much content in Board meetings and it would be better to separate into different meetings.

Kon: On one hand I agree that we discuss content too much, on the other we operate differently to other organisations. We are having a lot of discussions on Slack which is good without having an actual meeting.

Hayley: Have an agenda item about picking a date but atm I think some time after Elections would be good.

Anthony: I have a question about the CEO role, that was supposed to be part of the Executive Editor. Might be good to look at adapting Executive Editor role.

Hayley: We can talk about it more at strategic meeting but I have proposed 2 models with different pros and cons that we can talk about before and at that meeting.

Angus: Executive Editor might be better to describe the Executive of News Team only, not sure.

Sam: I agree.

### **Visual Content Executive Report: Tristan Khaw**

*(Received late with apologies)*

## Visual Team Members Update

No new applications thus far. All previous potential applicants emailed are overseas.

Amna and Charlie are both happy to contribute. Charlie will be in a more reserve role.

Editor Sam Wright is going to be our new Fortnightly Five host! He might be the first combined news and visual team member in Observer which is exciting news

## Black Lives Matter Town Hall

This event was scheduled last Friday. Unfortunately, it had to be rescheduled as one of the speakers had COVID symptoms. I'll still be there to get it done.

## Bush Week Event

We had a good live stream and a bit of an office tour for Bush Week. Not as great as a live event would have been of course, but we made the most of what we could.

Tristan: The only thing is we will be doing F5 this weekend, I am starting on the script and organising that soon.

Anthony: The fact that we've stopped doing the catch up might be a way of just doing the F5. It was never formerly discontinued but it doesn't make sense to do both.

Moved by Sam, seconded by Hayley. Passes unanimously.

### **News Content Executive Report: Anthony Lotric**

Our output has been lower than average these last couple of weeks. I think this was in large part because we had not had the chance to meet up with all reporters, as we did this Monday. We also have some longer term articles that have taken time to put together, and which should be publishable within the fortnight.

Also, we have had some issues getting emails back from some other organisations. Hopefully this will get better as the Semester proceeds, as people settle in to the new arrangements.

The rollout of the first few explainers we brainstormed a couple of weeks ago have been a great success. It would be good to continue this work from week to week or from fortnight to fortnight. ANU media has been great at giving us archival info, so we have quite a lot to draw upon.

I think it might be good to go back to having editors on call from day to day so that there is always someone we know is ready to coordinate or produce short notice articles or breaking graphics. This is especially pertinent during election season.

As elections are coming up, we are going to need all hands on deck across the teams. Copy, graphics and also likely tech support will all be needed at short notice. It would probably be worthwhile organising a dedicated meeting between the teams sometime soon to plan how we will coordinate this.

We have received a number of reporter applications. While we already have enough reporters, it would probably be good to take on and train one more for when Adelle resigns, and someone has to step up as editor. I will inform the rest of the applicants that they can reapply at the beginning of next year.

I have emailed Grace back about doing the debates with Woroni. The debates will most likely be online. The news editorial team will have a discussion soon about who will moderate, and how they will be run more generally.

I think it would be worth investigating if there is a more permanent fix to the web issues we have been having (namely the website going down after we publish an article). Angus, does this make sense, and if so, is it worth pursuing?

As Hayley and Bec have highlighted, it would be good if we could collaborate with Zoe to ensure that our articles are accessible to those with vision impediments. We should organise a meeting with her soon, which we can discuss at the next news editors meeting.

Anthony: Would be good to have an election meeting between the teams to plan for the intensive period and figure out issues. I don't know if that is best to organise here but we could organise it over Slack.

Kon: Probably not a Board issue, maybe make a Slack channel to talk about it. I will give my opinion on Catch Up, I get your perspective but it could be good to see it continued to give something for Reporters to do.

Anthony: They could write the scripts sometimes. The other thing was it will be good to figure out how we will make articles more accessible, I think we can embed the text in the image. We can talk to Zoe about that.

Moved by Sam, seconded by Tristan. Passes unanimously.

### **Web Executive Report: Angus Brooks**

Since my last report I have been primarily working on the Google Drive project, which is progressing, albeit at a slower pace than I was expecting. I hope to have this completed this week. I will be looking for feedback from teams about how the new Google Drive works for them, and how it can be improved.

It appears that changes made to the back end of WordPress have significantly improved site performance, with no downtime or crashes since my last report. I will continue to monitor this closely. If anyone encounters any issues with the website please log them via Slack so they can be investigated. I intend to readopt the use of the Tech Support slack channel for such purposes.

I'm keen to start using the ANU Observer Twitter account again, and I intend to integrate it into our current WordPress content management system to allow team members to publish articles to it/tweet from it using the same system. I'd be interested in hearing some feedback on this.

Angus: I will add that I think my plan is to start moving everyone over to the new Google Drive from this weekend or next week. I have struggled to put together a structure because the current folders are all over the place. Once the teams start using it we will have a better indicator of what works and what doesn't. We can run the two side by side if people can't find things.

Kon: Anything we'll be putting in that drive will be from an Observer email.

Angus: Yes it can't be accessed by others.

Kon: Have you backed up the Board drive?

Angus: I haven't yet but I feel like it's alright and could just be copied.

Moved by Tristan, seconded by Sam. Passes unanimously.

## **Item 5 - Items for Decision**

### **Item 6 - Items for Discussion**

#### **6.1 SSAF**

Kon: This is the most beautiful thing (it's not, but). The Board essentially exists to monitor that pretty much, but technically it's to have control over decisions about money. This is really important, I have not been informed yet how SSAF will work this year. From the schedule given last year there was a meeting we attended sometime in August and information about dates was given in June/July [but we haven't been given that yet]. Luby is no longer responsible for overseeing it but someone called Anastasia. Luby did an introduction email in early July. I sent her an email yesterday because we were preoccupied with other stuff but I was also hoping she was going to come in touch and give us information. I asked Luby to give us information about the SSAF round this year and I didn't receive any. I will be coming in touch with the Woroni Treasurer. I am not expecting a response from Anastasia until the end of this week. We are probably not missing much but it is their fault for not informing us of the meeting. If they don't reply we should call. I don't know who is working in Chancellery and who is working from home, it's hard to actually call people because they haven't updated their details.

Angus: Their numbers should forward.

Kon: It depends. Not all services have provided information about it. Even when I called the ANU front desk they [didn't know what was happening]. I will wait on the email, they will reply eventually I believe. SSAF round doesn't start until September, we should start worrying about it from now but in the sense of

what we should bid for e.g for equipment, phone, subscriptions, software. This is your chance to ask about something. I think I've said it earlier but I want people to start sending through things or create a document and chuck everything in there. It's a bit uncertain [about whether we will receive the same proportion]. For news you should meet and think about what you want. For Tristan a large part is equipment and software subscriptions so try and have a think about it before the next meeting.

## 6.2 KPIs and Output

Hayley: Next strategic meeting, I understand it's been a difficult period, but it would be better for us to hold ourselves to certain standards throughout the year. Each team should put together a short report, in regard to the weeks in which they reach their KPI's, and which weeks they don't. I'll probably make this an actionable for one of the editors on the board. Other team's will do their own, i.e. Kon will do his, Hayley hers etc.

Tristan: Not much to say, I agree we should keep ourselves to that standard but it has been hard this semester. Hopefully the next semester won't be as bad.

Actionable: Each team exec + Hayley to work on a short report regarding KPIs for strategic meeting.

## 6.3 Cleaning Roster

Hayley: Whole team or executive? How often?

Sam: Should be executive.

Kon: Wouldn't be good if reporters walk into the office and the toilet looks bad

Hayley: I think off week of board meetings would be better, 2 people

Anthony: So they have a buddy.

Kon: If any important people come in that would be good.

## 6.4 Strategic Meeting and Operational Meeting

Hayley: Strategic meeting I already mentioned, Kon can talk about Operational Meeting.

Kon: Something we had last year which helped with communication and understanding how other people feel. It is to be done in a very professional manner, it's to understand that there is a reason someone might be feeling the way they feel. I would like to involve the other Elected Officers. I would say next week but I want to have it after the Internal Survey. I would like perspective of Reporters/Visual team members and get some feedback about how they feel about the organisation and we can discuss a lot of these things in the operational meeting.

Hayley: Next week fine if survey is out for long enough/taken by most.

Kon: I would like to write Internal Survey because I don't have as much association with teams, but would like you to review it.

Hayley: I think we should set an agenda

Kon: We can take a record if you want. Tristan are you good on weekends?

Tristan: You'll have to let me know early dude

## 6.5 Social

Hayley: I think it would be better out of the office

Kon: Do you think the office might be a more accessible location?

Angus: We could do a poll

Hayley: Can we do a nice Christmas outing?

Anthony: I think it would be nice for the first social just to do it here

Actionable: Angus to make a poll for social in general for a social next Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

## 6.6 Leave Policy

Hayley: I just wanted to bring up that we do have a leave policy. You can take up to three weeks off and this is still paid for by your stipend. We aren't going to be too strict, if you just feel too burnt out just let us know. Just wanted to make it clear, just send us a message and let your teams know that this is something we can do

Kon: Make sure you communicate this with everyone else, people within your teams.

Hayley: This applies to elected officers and non elected officers it is just different since reporters don't have stipends.

Anthony: I think we can discuss this at the next news meeting with reporters

Hayley: Main point is just let us know

Kon: If editors need some time off, don't just afk. Give us a bit of notice

## 6.7 Two-to-Sign Policy

Kon: Exciting because it's not an actual policy. The thing is, I would like to clarify a few things about last year when I was voting for things a lot of times what they were doing was putting people on the Board just to pass things rather than educating them about things they're doing. One of these things is having 2 bank accounts, one to store money (for security reasons) and one for purchases. I only found out yesterday that in some context we should refer to it as a policy which the auditors caught out. We voted on that but I don't know how valid that voting is if it's not an actual policy. Essentially we are required to have 2 people signing to approve transfers from savings to spendings account. It might be good to create a policy about that. It's probably important to look at that before the end of the year. When you have an auditor coming to you saying 'what is this' when there's nothing to explain it except minutes it can be a bit [hard to explain].

Hayley: One thing we could do is adjust the constitution to include this. I don't want to restrict future people from organising their finances in a different way. I also can't think of a policy that that would fit into neatly. Will look into it.

## Item 7 - Other Business

### Item 8 - Recall Actionables

8.1 Angus to make a poll for social in general for a social next Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

8.2 Each team exec + Hayley to work on a short report regarding KPIs for strategic meeting.

8.3 Cleaning roster (Hayley)

8.4 Ordering Shirts

8.5 Arrange a meeting with Anastasia and discuss a reserve plan.

8.6 Create a SSAF guide

8.7 Buy digital equipment for F5

Meeting closed at 18:21