



# THE ANU OBSERVER

## **General Meeting 2023-05-24**

Agenda

Location: ANU Observer Office and Zoom Hybrid  
1/25 Childers Street  
Time: 1800

**Item 1: Meeting Opens and Apologies**

- 1.1 Acknowledgement of Country
- 1.2 Apologies: Eleanor Ellis

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

- 2.1 Minutes from the Previous Meeting

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pkaKyr4g6ztCrAWHlzvKANWGxeW6vqtf/edit?usp=sharing&oid=107931511694861554650&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Moved by Hannah Farrow  
Seconded by Darlene Rowlands

Passed by majority

**Item 3: Reports and Matters Arising**

- 3.1 Report of the Chair of the Board (Appendix A)
- 3.2 Report of the Chair of the Editorial Committee (Appendix B)
- 3.3 Report of the Visual Team (Appendix C)
- 3.4 Report of the Web Executive (Appendix D)
- 3.5 Report of the Community Executive (Appendix E)
- 3.6 Secretary's Report (Appendix F)
- 3.7 Finance Executive's Report (Appendix G)

Procedural to take reports as read and move on.

Moved by Hannah Farrow  
Seconded by Will Novak

Passed by majority

**Item 4: Items for Decision**

- 4.1 Appointment of Arbitration Panel Members

*Nominations for Arbitration Panel Members are to be advertised prior to the next General Meeting. Nominations will be received by the Chair in the period between the calling of a General Meeting and the opening of that Meeting.*

*Motion to appoint moved by Hannah Farrow  
Seconded by Rowey*

*Passed by majority*

## 4.2 Motion to Amend ANU Observer Constitution

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ey8l\\_MUs5KUKVTyQGNFAxLYBx3m-J7eE/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113691320053636606967&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ey8l_MUs5KUKVTyQGNFAxLYBx3m-J7eE/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113691320053636606967&rtpof=true&sd=true)

We are moving the payment period that must be on the website from 3 weeks to 2 weeks.

Moved by Hannah Farrow

Seconded by James Weatherman and Kathleen

*Passed by majority*

### **Item 5: Elections**

*Returning Officer: Roxanne Missingham*

Candidate statements will be read out.

Editor:

Nuria Olive

*Nuria Olive will be the new Editor*

Secretary Applicants

-James

-Nuria

-Rowey

-Maya

*James Weatherman will be Secretary.*

Community Executive:

Mackenzie Watkins

*Mackenzie Watkins will be Community Executive*

Hannah: For positions with no nominations we will open a casual vacancy after the OGM. These positions will include:

-Web Executive

-Arbitration panel members

**Item 6: Items for Discussion**

*n/a*

**Item 7: Other Business**

*n/a*

**Item 8: Date of next meeting and Close of Meeting**

Semester 2 2023 for OGM 2

Meeting closed by Hannah Farrow 7:08PM

**Appendix A: Report of the Chair of the Board**

With a mostly new team gaining governance experience, we initially felt uncertain and ill-prepared. However, we persevered and created an environment that fostered learning and interest in governance among all members.

We prioritized open discussions and lengthy meetings to address important issues and questions. Although not flawless, our Board became more efficient and organized. We also made a concerted effort to separate content discussion from governance, despite the majority of our members being content creators without extensive governance backgrounds. I want to express my gratitude to our dedicated team, who went above and beyond by maintaining a well-structured agenda, reviewing policies, and actively seeking ways to enhance our Board. Witnessing the growth of individuals who started with little knowledge of governance or handling sensitive situations into valuable contributors and advisors has been truly rewarding.

Overall, this past year has been a transformative journey of growth and learning for our Board. Despite initial challenges, we have emerged more organized, efficient, and focused on both content and governance. With the implementation of constitutional changes and the valuable feedback received, we are optimistic about the future and committed to continuous improvement.

**Appendix B: Report of the Executive Editor****Appendix C: Visual Content Executive Report**

2023 so far for the Visual Team has been booming in some areas and more subdued in others. By far the most notable endeavour of the team is the 'Our Experts Have Observed' podcast, a project that has been worked on since early December. After extensive branding, marketing, producing production pipelines and creating a podcast studio, the podcast has kicked off this year to a tremendous start. We've seen regular three-figure amounts of streams for all 13 of our episodes, nearly 100 scans of the QR codes on the posters around the ANU campus, some great engagement with the promotional Facebook

posts and an overall extremely encouraging amount of public and internal enthusiasm for the project. I'm really looking forward to seeing the heights that the podcast will reach going into Semester 2. It's something that everyone who's worked on it is very proud of. The other biggest endeavour of the Visual Team has been our Big Night Out coverage this year - after multiple meetings with IAC, we were able to secure some great media access on the night and create a killer video exploring the nerves and performances of the bands themselves. Alongside our photography and social media activity regarding BNO, our coverage was really special and was released to much enthusiasm by the ANU community. Some other endeavours of the portfolio in my term have been the campus-wide poster run promoting the podcast, team photos of everyone at the organisation, and a series of infographics at the end of last year showcasing the organisation's best statistics and moments in 2022.

Albeit its smaller size than the News Team, the Visual Team has seen growth this year and we've hired some really talented people - notably in the videography and video editing part of the team. The need for another graphic designer is also something I've become acutely aware in my term, and hiring for that is well underway. The Visual Team meetings that I've been holding weekly have also been really helpful and a much better arrangement than members of the Visual Team sitting in on News Meetings like they were last year.

I'd once again like to thank both the members of the Board, the wider Observer team and the overall student body for their continued enthusiasm in the projects of the Visual Team, and am really looking forward to what we can produce in the rest of 2023.

## **Appendix D: Web Executive Report**

### Web Executive Report

The growth of the Observer team has kept me very busy in my capacity as Web Executive. While my official Web Executive handover with Nick didn't occur for a while after I assumed the role, I was still able to familiarise myself with the necessary software and figure out how to undertake the tasks required. I will admit that after my handover, Nick's tips have helped me become far more efficient at said tasks, and I'm currently confident in my ability to solve any web/onboarding-related issues that the organisation runs into.

I've consolidated my notes from my handover - as well as tips from my own experience - into an updated document that will be used to train the next Web Exec when we hire them. Due to the role's relatively painless responsibilities 90% of the time, I'm confident that we'll be able to find someone to fill the role. Unfortunately, it's just that annoying 10% of the time where our website breaks which makes the role of Web Executive very annoying on occasion.

Nonetheless, I've become very confident in the Google Admin Console, Slack management and WordPress, and have continually been onboarding, adding people to the right mailing list and lightly refreshing the look of the website; you'll notice that the 'Home', 'Team' and other pages look a little different. While I wanted to keep these changes minimal and not

commit to a complete redesign (rather, just work with what we've got and change a few elements), the rickety state of both our front end and backend has led to the occasional technical issue arising. However, our website is something that we've raised to ANU and will address later in the year.

## **Appendix E: Community Executive Report**

Since assuming the role of Community Executive, I have made significant progress in various areas, including costing, human resources, and the planning of a stakeholder event. Here's an update on each of these aspects

**Costings:** At the beginning of my term, I diligently compiled a document that encompasses numerous quotes for proposed initiatives and items that the Community Executive role might pursue. This document serves as a valuable resource for budgeting and financial decision-making, enabling us to assess the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of our initiatives. By having a comprehensive overview of costs, we can make informed decisions to allocate resources efficiently and effectively.

**Human Resources:** During this year, the responsibilities of the Community Executive role have expanded to include human resources management. With a team of approximately 20 individuals, I have taken on the role of being a point of contact for officers, addressing various matters related to their well-being. This includes providing support and guidance on mental health issues, facilitating discussions on work-life balance, and addressing concerns that officers may not feel comfortable bringing up with their editors. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, we aim to enhance the overall well-being and productivity of our team.

**Stakeholder Event:** We are currently in the planning phase for a proposed community stakeholder event, scheduled for the upcoming semester. This event aims to bring together key stakeholders from the ANU community, including club presidents, ANUSA president, Gensec, department reps, Residential Hall presidents, as well as representatives from academic colleges like CASS and CBE. The event will provide a platform for these stakeholders to address the issues they are facing in their respective domains.

Overall, as Community Executive, I have been actively working towards enhancing our understanding of costs, promoting a supportive human resources environment, and planning a stakeholder event that will foster engagement and collaboration within the ANU community. These initiatives will contribute to the growth and success of our organization while strengthening our relationships with stakeholders.

## **Appendix F: Secretary's Report**

The organization has had a very successful first Semester. We have recruited enthusiastic new members and have exciting community initiatives planned.

In terms of administrative tasks for the secretary role, I have been diligent in recording minutes, sharing agendas in advance, and communicating with individuals about their responsibilities. I will be initiating the change to the constitution if it is successfully passed tonight. We have agreed to now have board meetings every two weeks to ensure there is regular communication and updating of roles.

I have made improvements to the Governance Training document to familiarise new members with our governance processes. This should enhance interaction and enable more efficient service to students. I have also created a Hiring Process document for new roles at Observer, not just relating to positions for reporters but for all roles at Observer. I have also ensured that there has been regular upkeep for notices relating to the board for the OGM, as per Observer's policies.

Additionally, as the secretary, I have been collaborating with the Board to develop our organization's strategic vision, which will be implemented by the respective teams. I am excited about setting future goals. All minutes from Board and General Meetings have been uploaded to the website for easy access and have been maintained.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the board members for their consistent hard work. I appreciate everyone's dedication in attending meetings and actively engaging with the agenda. I am also excited to initiate the handover to the next secretary, which will be appointed at the OGM.

## **Appendix G: Report of the Finance Executive**

The ANU Observer aims to provide accurate, detailed, and timely coverage of campus events. The funding is used to support our office rental payments, allowances and honoraria, purchasing of equipment, and covering other general expenses of running this news organization.

The ANU Observer Inc receives 2% SSAF of the pool funded by us – the students. It is pivotal that we receive SSAF for the operation of this organization, as our daily operation requires the funding provided by SSAF. Throughout the period, the Finance Executive is the key communicator for all financials. This includes, and is not limited to, the payment of rent for our Observer Office, calculation of Allowances, payment of Allowances & Honoraria, obtaining the bid the SSAF – along with the pertaining

Reserve Fund allocations, compiling the documents and engaging in the audit and creating the master budget.

#### Student Services Council Engagement:

The Finance Executive engages in 5 periodic meetings annually with the Student Services

Council. The purpose is to engage indirectly with SSAF funded organizations, such as ANUSA, Woroni and ANU Sport to provide moderate transparency and engagement between the ANU and the SSAF funded organizations. My job is to talk about ANU Observer's achievements for the Period, along with me presenting the Periodic report about our spendings for the Period. Normally this involves me attending the meeting and attending a preliminary meeting with the organizations in preparation of the meeting.

#### Auditing:

The ANU Observer must undergo an audit annually. This is perhaps the most significant service for this position, requiring a level of understanding of the operational and administrative side of the ANU Observer. Due to the Finance Executive roles being switched and passed down rather frequently, it is often the case where the current Finance Executive is dealing with materials that had and should have been dealt with the previous 2 or so Finance Executive when they had the position.

This requires a level of compilation of the documents along with a level of scrutiny and judgement level when providing information and whatnot to our engaging auditors. Of course, this is rather difficult when the documents you are dealing with are almost 2 years old. The engagement was rather enlightening for me personally, but I hope to prepare my succeeding Finance Executive with the engagement.

#### Acquittal:

It seems like the acquittal method has changed. From my handover documents, it states that I must acquit annually with the ANU and acquit all unspent funds during the year. The method of acquittal that had been stated in my handover document was unfortunately outdated; certain complications had been faced but the confusion had been cleared and I hope to update my succeeding Finance Executive with the updated methodology.

#### Invoice:

The Finance Executive needs to invoice ANU biannually to claim our fundings. Normally this isn't a requiring task, but at times I find it that certain requests do not go as according as possible and need to be repeated.

#### Allowance & Honoraria:



The Allowance calculations are completed by the Finance Executive. Once again, this normally isn't a requiring task unless there are some roles transitions throughout the period. For me personally, this was a rather complicating process as I didn't get a thorough walk-through of what had to be completed, along with the fact that I didn't know how many days were in 1 period for starters (all 5 periods have different days).

Personally, I think the pivotal thing with this role is the level of accountability the Finance Executive is faced with. If certain things do not go as planned, I am faced with levels of collisions that I may not exactly be liable for. I believe that this role requires professional judgment and initiative to carry out the best values for this organization.