



**Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative  
Annual General Meeting 2019-2020  
Sunday 21 March 2021 Minutes  
700-850 Little River-Ripley Rd, Little River**

**Present:** Adam Lampton-Nicholls, Ruby Bennett, Eileen Smith, Mark Thompson, Cherie Houldcroft, Vicki Figg, Chris Murphy, Stacie Murphy, Alan Murphy, Jasmine-Skye Marinos, Liz Abrahams, David McLachlan, Mick Ryan, Mark Shaw, Jordyn Flagg, Sripathy Sarma, Judith Dalton-Walsh, Wendy Brabham, Kiralee Hogema, Emily McDonald, Richard Fry, Jayden Hickey, Ebony Hickey, Kristie Fraser-Lange, Tahlia Dempsey, Fiona Ryan, Mark Edwards, Simon Flagg, Ricky Abrahams, Naomi Surtees, Kristi Watts, Sarah Murphy, Peter Surtees, Bri Ampa Hayes, Nellie Flagg, David Flagg, Rory Charles, Jenny Megee, Patrick Tanner, Linda Tanner, Kerry Edwards, Gina Chapman, Joylene Walsh, Marelle Lampton-Nicholls, Sharni Couzens, Cody Langridge, Hayley Couzens, Shane Clarke, Megan Frazer, Beth Davis, Margie Hayes, Jordan Edwards, Lachlan Edwards, Tegan Edwards, Lisa Briggs, Jack Woolford, Bridget Glennen, Alfie Oram, James Jose, Jessie Abrahams.

**Minute taker:** Fiona Ryan

1. **Welcome** – Traditional Welcome to Country performed by Wadda-wurrung Traditional Owners led by Jordan Edwards; with dance and smoking ceremony
2. **Respect Protocol** – 1 minute silence
3. **Apologies:** Craig Edwards, Amanda Carter, Fiona Schlensog, Shellee Strickland, Alastair Vick, Maree Marston, Shantelle Lucas-Ballie, Angela Walsh, Jamie Butcher, Kathy Davis, Gordana Kerr, Justin Haas, Rachel Oxford, Lauren Kittelty, Cheryl Meath, Michelle Gray, Corey Baulch, Tamika Baulch, Justine McCarthy, Reg Abrahams, Kay Edwards, Stephen Walsh, Michael Thorne, Simon Thorne, Samantha Watts, Jo Chester, Joleen Ryan, Kerrie Alsop, Skye Duncan, Todd Fry, Greg Edwards, Mackenzie Chapman, Aunty Lyn McInnes, Mathew Barnes, Jackie Brown, Georgina Brown, Duane Luki, Sandra Brogden, Kylie Clarke, Kerrie Black.
4. **Acceptance of Minutes**

**a) 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Wathaurong's CEO - Lisa Briggs noted and responded to the listed actions from the previous 2019 AGM Minutes:**

**Action 1: Mark Edwards asked that AGM minutes be mailed out when the request for nominations for the election of Wathaurong's Board Directors is advertised.**

The previous AGM's draft minutes were placed on the Wathaurong website with a link to it on Wathaurong's Facebook page.

**Action 2: AoD residential program to be developed.**

Options were being explored but further development needed post Covid-19. This will be discussed more at a Community meeting.

**Action 3: Joleen Ryan asked that members get the Annual Report before the AGM is held, possibly by email, so we can read it beforehand. Craig Edwards replied that Joleen was right**

**and that we want to get the Annual Report out beforehand, will make it accessible from Wathaurong's website like the AGM minutes.**

Both the previous AGM's draft minutes and the 2020 Annual Report were made available on Wathaurong's website as requested.

**Action 4: The Board are to review the Co-operative's Constitution with Community consultation; and will hold an SGM prior to next year's AGM as part of that process.**

Due to Covid-19 restrictions in place by the Victorian Government we were not able to review our Constitution through a series of Community consultations and so this action will need to be carried forward, dependant on any further restrictions that may be put in place prior to Wathaurong's 2021 AGM.

- Wendy Brabham asked if there were any questions from reading the previous 2019 AGM Minutes
- Joylene Walsh enquired about Action 2 listed on page 1 – Priority Access Policy and what does the 15% mean
- Lisa Briggs replied that the 15% are non-Aboriginal people and have been in the Community a long time that use our services.
- Joylene Walsh stated that she thinks this policy needs to be put in place so Community can be the first to access services.

**NOTE: All members present satisfied with the 2019 AGM Minutes**

**Moved: Mick Ryan**

**Seconded: Naomi Surtees**

**Minutes Carried**

## **5. Financial Report 2019-2020**

Wendy Brabham noted that Sripathy Sarma from our auditors LBW Chartered Accountants was present to answer members questions about the auditor's report; and invited Wathaurong's Chief Financial Officer, Yohan Kumaran to present the financial report. Yohan presented the Financial Report to the Community as a video presentation with the following noted:

### **Page 56 – Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**

- Wathaurong increased its revenue by 30% going from \$10,730,946 in 2019 to \$13,542,755 in 2020.
- Wathaurong's expenses have increased too. We have hired more staff to implement the additional services we have provided; and this has led to an increase in the staff training and development expense.
- Wathaurong's surplus (profit) for the 2019-2020 financial year was \$528,462.
- The Movement in Asset Revaluation Reserve has increased to \$586,769.
- Wathaurong's Total Comprehensive Income for the year was \$1,115,231.
- This significant increase in profit was because of a project undertaken in last year. We reviewed all of Wathaurong's programs, the deliverables and what were the KPIs set for us for our grant funding. We then worked out if we've met those deliverables, then we put together a case for the grant funding - primarily Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) to justify and show that we have met our deliverables, as this avoided any recruitment of funds.
- It's important that we keep reviewing like this moving forward as it will help build up Wathaurong's retained earnings. This will make us less reliant on Government funding to complete projects we wish to undertake. Creating cash reserves that can be utilised for programs that don't receive funding but are essential to meet by community needs then Wathaurong will have our own sufficient cash.

**Motion Carried**

## 6. 2020 Annual Report

Wendy Brabham asked the Community to take a moment to read through the 2020 Annual Report and advised that the Community will receive the professionally published version in the mail.

Short presentations were given on each area, with the following noted:

Lisa Briggs (CEO) stated that Community and Culture are Wathaurong's main focus. Lisa noted the importance of community involvement, stating Wathaurong's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was an example of this as reflected in the way community participated in events over the last year with many more significant dates and events to come. Lisa mentioned that the Early Years team was recognised by the State Government for the way the team embedded culture into the Early Years programs we offer. Lisa congratulated the Health Services team for their response to Covid-19, with no community transmissions recorded in our Community. We assisted Community during this difficult time with access to food, preventative packs with masks and sanitiser, these masks were made by paid community members and hired casual delivery drivers to do food drops which provided short term employment.

Lisa shared the following from the 2020 Annual Report:

page 7 – displays a snapshot of Wathaurong's 40 years.

page 10 – 13 CEO's Report

Wathaurong's overall performance demonstrates a strong growth trend rate both in local Aboriginal community participation (60%), funding (31%) and service delivery (35%). There was a 43% increase in Health Service attendance rate and in Family Services a 28% growth rate.

As part of our working relationship with Aboriginal Housing Victoria, we received housing upgrade grants for 12 of our existing houses. The biggest challenge for Wathaurong is that we require 666 three-bedroom homes by 2031 to ensure that we reduce homelessness. Wathaurong will work with both the local and state Government regarding housing and homelessness.

Pages 14-15 Organisational Chart

The organisational chart looks slightly different than last year due to a recommendation to Wathaurong's Board to implement Executive Managers into the organisational structure. We need to restructure the programs in a way that effectively groups the programs like units that fit under the same category together. Lisa noted that most ACCO's don't invest in a Traditional Owner position, but Wathaurong have done this to ensure we are staying connected with culture and remaining grounded.

- Aunty Nellie Flagg asked how many staff does Wathaurong employ?
- Simon Flagg replied currently 176 but end of 2020 financial year it was approximately 150.
- Lisa Brigg responded that it was about 90 staff when she started as CEO in 2018.

Simon Flagg (Corporate Services Executive Manager) discussed the Corporate Services report on pages 22-26 noting the following:

A key change in Corporate Services was the engagement of Traditional Owner Jordan Edwards into the Advisory Role. This was needed for the organisation to grow and improve on building our culture into business operations. Also currently looking at what Wathaurong has in place and reviewed what Wathaurong needs to be implemented to further grow. This includes reviewing our systems and having community engagement as a focus. This AGM is an example of community engagement. We are hoping to change Wathaurong from being a place you only come to receive services, to being a place you come to be a part of the Co-operative.

Simon highlighted training undertaken by community members, a Certificate II in Carpentry held with Kangan Institute, and by staff a Diploma of Community Services with Bendigo TAFE.

There are still 22 houses we have in our Housing program. Wathaurong are reviewing community needs and what the co-operative can do to improve service to community.

Regarding Colac, Ebony Hickey really does a lot of great work there and we are really starting to re-engage with the community in Colac now that restrictions are easing.

- Joylene Walsh asked if Wathaurong employ an I.T. person.
- Simon Flagg replied that we do his name is Jack Woolford and currently we're working on our own Wathaurong App.
- Joylene Walsh enquired if Wurdi Youang provides a profit.
- Simon Flagg answered not a lot at the moment.
- Joylene Walsh suggested that we could invest in a plantation or emus.
- Simon Flagg responded that we've established a Wurdi Youang Committee and can look at discussing that and emus have already been discussed too.

Kristie Fraser-Lange (Family Services Manager) discussed the Family Services report on pages 28-38 noting the following:

The programs within Family Services have been grouped into Family Services, Out of Home Care, Early Years. During this year there is also Justice, Family Violence and NDIS.

The Diploma of Community Service was completed by 18 Family Services staff. This created a gap for a period of time that we employed people to fill as the course was 2 days a week.

In Kinship Care and Home Based Care program we have contracted family reunifications which is starting in ACCO's at the moment. During this time all 6 children have been reunified with their parents rather than wait 6-12 months of the order.

Lisa Briggs spoke about Family Violence and the increase of Family Violence, that we need to do more work at preventing kids being removed. Reducing stressors like financial burden.

Mick Ryan (Health Services Practice Manager) discussed the Health Services report on pages 39-45 noting the following:

Implemented the flu vaccine program and Covid-19 screening for asymptomatic people which was quite successful. Afterwards Wathaurong ran a Cold & Flu clinic at Forster St which is still running now. This was for people to access our services at Forster St minimising transmission risks at the Health Services located at Morgan St. We ran an essential clinic during the beginning of the first lockdown and have a Covid-19 safety plan in place.

Telehealth has been a massive help for Community to access scripts. We added a new system ERX as electronic scripts software had to be updated. We are the first clinic in Victoria, if not Australia to use this program.

Lisa Briggs added that Wathaurong now has four Aboriginal Health Practitioners, they are Kerrie Alsop, Kiralee Hogema, James Jose and Jessica Mitchell.

Mark Edwards (Wathaurong Glass Executive Manager) discussed the Wathaurong Glass & Arts report on pages 46-48 noting the following:

Mark stated that the report itself is pretty self-explanatory but wanted it noted that he has been very impressed with his staff – Jarrod, Jermaine and Ammie.

He added that you can't grow when there are limitations. Currently we are at \$500,000-\$600,000 and now with the purchase of the building next door there's the potential to increase that to \$1.2-\$1.5 million. However, Covid-19 is currently preventing expansion this will change in the coming months. We also have 2 new staff members starting next week.

- Kerry Edwards enquired if there was still a discount on glass for members.

- Mark Edwards responded that Community do get a discount.
- Joylene Walsh asked about traineeships.
- Mark Edwards replied that years ago under CDEP Wathaurong Glass use to do traineeships but there's no point employing a trainee for 16-26 weeks then no position available for them to go into.
- Simon Flagg added that Wathaurong are looking into traineeships for Community.

After the short presentations Wendy Brabham asked if there were any further questions. There were none.

Wendy Brabham called for a mover and seconder of the 2020 Annual Report.

That the members accept and endorse the presented 2020 Annual Report.

**Moved: Richard Fry**

**Seconded: Mark Edwards**

**Motion Carried**

## **7. Election of Directors (four vacancies)**

Lisa Briggs advised the Community on the process of the Election of Directors.

In accordance with the Act, the Wathaurong Board called an Annual General Meeting, with a notice calling for nominations to fill four vacancies. This was advertised in the Geelong Advertiser on 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 and within Wathaurong's January 2021 community mailout.

The current Wathaurong Board members are:

- Craig Edwards, Chairperson - was elected at the 2019 AGM
- Wendy Brabham
- Judy Dalton-Walsh
- Shane Clarke
- David Flagg

There are 5 positions on the Wathaurong Board, with rotation cycles of 2 then 3, each serving a 2-year term.

Nominations for the four positions were advertised and as only four eligible nominations were received, a ballot election process is not required.

The three nominations received unopposed, and are duly elected to serve until the 2022 AGM:

- Wendy Brabham
- Judy Dalton-Walsh
- Shane Clarke

The one nomination received unopposed, and are duly elected to serve until the 2021 AGM:

- David Flagg

Lisa Briggs and Community present welcomed the newly elected Director Shane Clarke, and also congratulated the re-elected Directors Wendy Brabham, Judy Dalton-Walsh and David Flagg as well.

## **8. Meeting closed**

The Acting Chairperson, Wendy Brabham thanked all for attending today. Wendy thanked the rest of the Board, Lisa, Executives and Management Team, and staff, then called the meeting closed at 12:50pm.