

ME/CFS SOCIETY (SA) INC
Minutes Annual General Meeting
12th November 2005 1-3 pm
Venue: DIRC, 195 Gilles St, Adelaide

Minute Secretary: Peter Mitchell

1. **Introduction:** The Chair and President, Peter Cahalan, opened the meeting by welcoming all present.
2. **Present:** There were approximately 20 people in attendance. The names in the appendix were those recorded. 29 Proxies were received, along with other apologies as noted in the appendix.
3. **Minutes of Previous General Meeting:** The minutes of the AGM held on 13 November 2004 were presented, read and accepted as correct.

Moved: Margaret Wing, seconded Emma Wing.

Carried

4. **Election of Management Committee:** Peter Mitchell, as returning officer, reported that he had received no new nominations for the Management Committee by the time of close of nominations. The ongoing members of the Committee are Peter Cahalan, Geoff Wilson, Margaret Wing, and Adrian Hill, Emma Wing, and Peter Mitchell.
5. **Election of Office Bearers:** The following nominations were received by the time of close of nominations:

Geoff Wilson for Treasurer
Peter Mitchell for Secretary

They were declared elected unopposed. The constitution, copies of which were available at the meeting, is silent on the matter of length of tenure of Office Bearers.

Motion: That Secretary and Treasurer positions be filled for a period of two years

Moved: Peter Cahalan, seconded David Shepherd

Carried

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Geoff Wilson presented the Treasurer's report, and presentation of audited Financial Statements. In summary, the Society had another reasonable year financially, bolstered by an anonymous donation of \$12,000 (the 4th year in a row that this donor had made such a donation), and an ongoing donation from the BankSA staff fund of \$1000. There had been a decrease in funds of just over \$6000 for the year.

Motion: That the financial reports for the period ending 30 June 2005 be accepted.

Moved: Jenny Gay, seconded M Wing

Carried

7. **President's Report:**

Peter Cahalan began his report by acknowledging the major event for the year, the

visit to SA by Professor Kenny De Meirleir of Brussels. This visit was the result of work and funding by the Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation, because of the excellent networks in SA. Prof De Meirleir spoke to a public meeting at Norwood of about 300 people, one of the largest ME/CS meetings in SA ever. Over the following two days in June, Prof De Meirleir participated in a forum of doctors and researchers at Adelaide University. The forum stressed the biological base of CFS, and reached agreement on the promotion of the Canadian protocol. Also discussed were new testing regimes, another area in which Prof De Meirleir has been providing leadership. An excellent report of the forum has since been shared with our members.

A second major achievement this year has been the fruits of our work on multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS). This was seen in a recent forum with members of the parliamentary committee which has produced a key report on MCS for the government. A key recommendation has been the formation of an interagency working party on MCS. This appears to be an important moment in time to push this issue of MCS forward.

Thirdly, we have been pleased with the progress of our Society's communications strategy in 2005. Our outstanding website is one of the best ME/CFS sites in the world. It receives an average of 80 unique visitors per day, every day. Our ebulletins began as a way of promoting the website but now have a life of their own, going out every week to over two-thirds of our members. We have now also begun using SMS messages to those members who wish to receive them: 95 currently. For those members without internet or mobile phone access, we have Linda Brett telephoning to keep in touch and *Talking Point*. Our magazine has come out quarterly, edited by Peter Scott, our webmaster. And we have produced a number of DVDs of seminars and forums. In these ways we believe we are keeping members informed and involved in the Society. We will continue to look for new ways of communicating.

Other activities in 2005 included:

- Progress on the Schools Resource Kit by Peter Mitchell and a number of supporters. This should lead to a kit for parents, students and teachers in 2006.
- A meeting with Open Access staff and parents.
- SAYEM website re-activated.
- The research database has been initiated via Adelaide University.
- The *ME/CFS Guidelines* are now in use in SA, and spreading. We have been asked to produce 3000 for practitioner sin NSW and 500 for Victoria. They have been praised by doctors as simple and straightforward for busy professionals.
- Developing connections: we are pleased with the ongoing links with the Alison Hunter Memorial Foundation. We have excellent relations with our counterparts in Victoria, which may lead to more national focus on ME/CFS in future.
- SAYME has had a slow year, however they have maintained monthly meetings. The SAYME website is now back online and there has been a lot

of interest in an online discussion group. There should be a Xmas SAYME magazine.

Other thanks for 2005:

- To Donna Briese, who retired from the committee in 2005 and from her role as office co-ordinator. I think many members would know Donna from her work on the phone line, but Donna put in enormous amounts of effort in so many areas to help other people with ME/CFS.
- To Mike Ritter our office Information and communications technology coordinator.
- To Emma Wing for huge efforts leading SAYME, and in the office and elsewhere.
- Badge Day/s. We have raised very useful amounts in this way in 2005. Thanks to Adrian Hill, David Shepherd, Bow Thompson, Carol Carroll and the Paproths in Port Pirie.
- Support Line leaders: thanks to Elaine Balfort, Vicki Foote, Alex Harris. Merindah Whitby. Also to our regional support leaders including Marion Hansen and David Shepherd, both in attendance at the AGM
- To Linda Brett for her outstanding support in the office and to Freya Thompson in more recent times.
- To Sarah White for leadership in SAYME.
- To Val McKeown, for reportage of the July forum: not an easy task!
- To the whole Management Committee for their great work in 2005.

I particularly want to thank Marg Wing for her years of dedicated service and leadership to Management Committee, the office, finances, catering, etc etc. Marg will not be continuing with the Management Committee, and we will miss her greatly.

Peter set out these future directions: continuing to improve our communications with members; having a stronger program of lectures and seminars, 2 to 3 major seminars next year, with 2 people working specifically on that focus; continuing to focus on young people and their families; continuing to explore opportunities for links with other societies, including the Victorian CFS Society; possibly sharing premises with another society.

We have achieved much from a base of about 20 active volunteers, but we have a huge resource base, and we look forward to utilising little bits from many people.

In conclusion, Peter wished members all good health and, if that was not possible, then a strong spirit.

Motion: That the President's report for 2004/5 be accepted:

Moved: Val McKeown, Seconded Margaret Wing

Carried

8. Any Other Business

Meeting ended 1:45 pm approx.

Note: a DVD was made of the meeting and a copy is held in the Society's office.