



## Oceanic Art Society 27<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

Held on Zoom from Sydney, NSW, Australia at 10:00 AEDT am on  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

- **Apologies** were received from: Michael Martin, Crispin Howarth, Margaret Cassidy, JD Mittman, Erwin Kok, Warwick Majcher, Jerry Liew & Paula Latos-Valier. Ten members of the society were present, Bill Rathmell, Nöelle Stiels, David Welch, Edwina King, Peter McCabe, Rita Uechtritz, Ian Wamijo, Emma Lenyszyn, Jim Elmslie, Pierre Laffont.
- **Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous AGM.** Acceptance was proposed by David Welch, seconded by Rita Uechtritz.
- **President's Report.** A summary of the president's report is given below.
  - **Again, the year has been highly challenging, but thanks to outstanding teamwork by the main Committee and the sub-committees, OAS's future still looks reasonably secure**
  - **The Journal has increased both in size and in quality:** During Margaret Cassidy's third year of editorship, the Journal has continued to improve, it has attracted new readers and advertisers. It is now routinely sixteen pages, and the Spring edition had another innovative online supplement to carry excellent images for which the print edition had insufficient space.
  - **Progress on social media has been rather slow,** as has the revamping of the website.
  - **The National Art School relationship (SOAF and lectures) resumed in mid-year;** we had wonderful support from their new team in running our live program on their refurbished campus.
  - **We held four live presentations since my last report (including one at SOAF), streaming most of them as webinars.** After last year's virtual AGM, Bill Evans took us on a conducted tour of his private collection of shields and other artefacts - direct from his historic premises in Oxford Street, Paddington, Sydney. After a six-month hiatus, caused by the refurbishment of the National Art School's campus, we returned in July with two excellent lectures in quick succession: Matt Poll, on the inspiring Mulka Art Project at the National Maritime Museum – "Shaped by the Sea" and Jean-Philippe Beaulieu, on the work behind his authoritative catalogue of all the known Uli sculptures from New Ireland - "Powerful Ancestors from the Pacific", which was reviewed in the Journal by Nöelle Rathmell-Stiels. Our fourth talk of the year was given at SOAF on the Omie barkcloth art of Papua New Guinea – "Of Spirit and Splendour" by Brennan King. It was a lavishly illustrated and scholarly study of the iconography used by the women of the Oro province.

- **Sydney Oceanic Art Fair** itself was again a brilliant success with prominent interstate and international visitors and with a record number of tables – it was ably organised by the sub-committee under the new leadership of Erwin Kok and with Emma Lenyszyn working as a very successful new liaison with vendors. It is likely that we will try to change the format a little in future, as the silent auction does not seem to be particularly well suited to the SOAF format at present. The National Art School continues to be a major sponsor of the OAS, by providing the stunning venue of the Cell Block Theatre for the event, essentially at cost.
- **The year ended with a superb Forum (our 10th) in Adelaide**, breaking the three-year drought caused by Covid – Australia in the Pacific: Cultures Past Present and Future – taking place at the end of November. Organised by Jim Elmslie, Peter McCabe and the South Australia Museum’s Steven Zagala, it featured some fourteen presentations, half of them from people of indigenous or islander descent – curators, scholars, collectors, enthusiasts, cultural leaders, artists and writers. Most of them have agreed to write their talks for the Journal next year.
- **The first days’ proceedings** ended with a dance performance by two Fijian men in front of the Museum and there was a gala dinner in the evening (wine sponsored by Yalumba) with an auction of books and artefacts expertly (and profitably) conducted by Alex Philips.
- **On the second day** the keynote speaker Djon Mundine amused the audience with a wittily sardonic critique of the attempts by bureaucrats to facilitate tourism through museums and art galleries - as a route to first nations cultural reconciliation. His talk was an interesting precursor to the two final presentations by people involved in the local first nations cultural centre project “Tarrkarri”, which seemingly is being reviewed even after work has commenced owing to a budgetary blowout.
- **As last year, we have mourned the passing of members of the OAS** and other friends, prominent collectors and cultural leaders in the world of Oceanic art:
  - Eric Coote
  - Dr Dolly Guise
  - Adrienne Kaepler
  - Pierre Moos
  - David Said
  - Bruce Seaman
  - Ramine Seaman

David made an important contribution to the early days of the OAS as editor of the Newsletter (which preceded the Journal).

The President’s report received the comment from Jim Elmslie that the success of the Forum was very much a result of a hardworking small team comprising himself, Peter McCabe and Stephen Zagala. The President commented that the Acting Treasurer had also contributed to solid financial management of the event.

- **Acting Treasurer’s Report.**

- **Total Equity is at \$21,345, an increase of 7% from the 2021 Financial Year.** It is worth noting that there have been major increases of equity over the last 4 years. In June 2019 the figure was \$11,109, hence a 92% increase at June 2022. Slowly but surely OAS has been moving forward after the COVID years.
- **Membership income is at \$13,223, an increase of 11%.** Again, it is worth noting there has been an increase in membership income of 40% since 2019
- **The Net Profit is \$1,407, down from \$5,649 in June 2021.** However, last year’s report made mention of \$3,600 (SOAF Vendor payments for the June 2022 Financial Year) as being received in the June 2021 Financial Year. In adjusting these figures accordingly, then the June 2022 Net Profit would show \$5,007 and June 2021 Net Profit showing \$2,049. Again, if we look at what has happened over the last 4 years, June 2022 Net Profit of \$5,007 compared with June 2019 Net Loss of \$4,593 there has been a significant turnaround of \$9,600 (108%)

The Acting Treasurer’s report received the comment from Rita Uechtritz that the improved Membership numbers were in no small measure the result of efforts by Pierre Laffont and Margaret Cassidy. The President agreed and said he would convey these sentiments to Margaret after the meeting. Jim Elmslie said he would offer a year’s free membership to all speakers at the forum who were not already members. He would coordinate with Pierre Laffont on this.

- **Election of Officers and Committee members:** The following nominations have been duly received, proposed, seconded and accepted:

Office	Nominee		Proposed	Seconded	
President	William Rathmell		R Uechtritz	IA	
Vice-President	Crispin Howarth		WR	GC	
Secretary					
Treasurer	Ian Wamijo		C Boylan	R Uechtritz	
Committee	David Welch		PL	WM	Public Officer
Committee	Margaret Cassidy		NS	JE	Journal Editor
Committee	Noëlle Stiels		WM	PL	Website s/c

Committee	Pierre	Laffont	NS	WR	Membership
Committee	Jim	Elmslie	WR	NS	
Committee	Irene	Ashburn	WM	JE	
Committee	Geoff	Carey	DW	NS	
Committee	Emma	Lenyszyn	WR	NS	
Committee	Jerry	Liew	RU	DW	
Committee	Warwick	Majcher	DW	JL	
Committee	JD	Mittmann	WR	NS	
Committee	Suzanne	Pilj	WR	JL	

The above nominees and were declared duly elected, unopposed.

- **Thanks to outgoing Office bearers and Committee members.**

During the last year, two stalwart committee members have had to reduce their involvement with the OAS and have resigned from the Committee:

- Rita Uechtritz handed over Treasurer's responsibilities to Ian Wamijo, and stepped back from the Committee as well, though she has agreed to continue to pack and post the Journals and for her name to be added to the advisors list.
- Krisztina Turza has returned permanently to Hungary and has stepped back from the Committee to the advisors list also. Krisztina ran the Facebook page for a while and she made a great effort to produce our 10<sup>th</sup> Forum in the Brisbane museums in 2021 but was frustrated by covid restrictions.

Both of these people have made a big contribution to the OAS and I want to formally thank them for their efforts, which in Rita's case have gone on for a considerable number of intense years

Other Committee members who have so far not received a special mention in this report for their efforts this year are David Welch, Nöelle Stiels (who has been acting as *de facto* Secretary) and Warwick Majcher who has been standing in for her on the website and social media sub- committee as well as transitioning the SOAF s/c management. Pierre Laffont has ably continued as Membership secretary from the other side of the planet, as well as organising a side trip of the *Parcours des Mondes* to museums in La Rochelle and Rochefort on the Atlantic coast of France.

Dominic McGeary has been working the Facebook page with Jerry Liew - thanks to them both for their efforts – but Dominic is now stepping back from this job.

- **Any additional questions/comments from the floor:** There being no further comments from the floor, the President took the opportunity to repeat his changed list of challenges for 2023:

What talent/energy does the OAS Committee desperately need to survive next year?

- A new Secretary to take the pressure off all the active members of the Committee
- Someone skilled in IT and video editing/production to take the pressure off David who has a more-than-full-time day-job

(Most of the above list also appeared at the end of my talk last year).

I would now add the following additional challenges/tasks:

- Follow-up liaison with the National Art School regarding SOAF plans
- Lecture dates; organising speakers/events and coordinating institutional relationships
- Preparation for the 2023 (11<sup>th</sup>) Forum and supporting the Melbourne sub-committee

Follow-up on registered charitable status application

- **Close of meeting:** The meeting closed at 10:50 am.

DRAFT 10/12/2022 (OAS 143) Amended and annexes added 13/12/2022

Further Amended to correct typo 22/11/23