

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Held on **Tuesday 26 November 2024**

Online via **Zoom** in accordance with the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* as amended

Meeting Opened at 6.04pm AEDT

Present & Eligible to Vote

- Darren Crombie RPIA (Fellow, President/Chair)
- Matt Collins MPIA (CEO)
- Skyy Anderson MPIA
- Michael Brewer MPIA
- John Brockhoff RPIA (Fellow)
- Imogen Featherstone RPIA
- Ray Haeren RPIA (Fellow)
- Cate Hart RPIA (Fellow)
- Dot Hepburn MPIA
- Andrew Holmes MPIA
- Peter Johns MPIA
- Nicholas Kamols MPIA
- Kirsty Kelly RPIA (Fellow)
- Vicki Lummer RPIA (Fellow)
- Laura Murray RPIA
- Stephen O'Connor RPIA (Fellow)
- John Petrakos RPIA
- Emma Riley RPIA (Fellow)
- Nathan Rooke MPIA
- Jenny Rudolph RPIA (Fellow)
- Eugene Sarich MPIA
- Rukshan de Silva RPIA
- Nicola Smith RPIA (Fellow)
- Jane Strange RPIA
- Ed Wensing MPIA (Life Fellow)
- Negar Yazdi MPIA

Others Present

- Karen Goldsmith (Chief Operating Officer)
- Brenda Payne (minutes)
- Lydia Lovelock
- Carmel McCormack

1. Welcome and Notification of Proxies

The Chair welcomed members to the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), being PIA's 73rd AGM.

The Chair acknowledged the traditional custodians of the lands throughout Australia where everyone was joining, and paid respects to Elders past and present, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present at the meeting.

PIA Fellows, Life Fellows and Honorary Fellows who were present at the meeting were also acknowledged.

The Chair confirmed a quorum was present. The Notice of Meeting and Explanatory Notes distributed to members on 30 October 2024 were taken as read.

The CEO, as Company Secretary, advised that eight proxy forms had been received, all appointed the President as their proxy, and all indicated how they would like to vote.

2. Apologies

The CEO advised that apologies for the meeting were received from:

- Garry Murphy, PIA's auditor from Nexia Australia
- Norma Shankie-Williams MPIA (Fellow)
- Stephen Smith RPIA (Fellow)
- Amy Wilkins PIA (Assoc.)
- Wendy Evans MPIA (Fellow)

3. Remembering Passed Fellows and Life Fellows

The Chair asked those present to take a moment to remember PIA's Fellows, Life Fellows and Honorary Fellows who had passed away in the preceding year. Those specifically remembered were: Fellows David Chesterman (NSW), Stephen Harris (NSW), Ian Morison (ACT), Nelson Ross (QLD), David Wright (ACT); Life Fellow John Henshall (VIC); Honorary Fellows Peter Barder (VIC), John Dawson (NSW); and friend of planning John Mant (NSW) who passed in 2021.

PIA relies on being notified when members pass, and sincerely apologises if anyone has been missed from this list.

4. Minutes of the 72nd AGM held via Zoom on 21 November 2023.

The confirmed Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 21 November 2023, as distributed with the Notice of Meeting, were tabled and taken as read.

5. President's Year in Review

The Chair presented the President's Year in Review and the Institute's 2023/24 Annual Review. Some notable points were:

- Achievements under all four of PIA's strategic pillars (Champion, Lead, Advocate, Educate), such as:

- Growth within the Registered Planner membership grade including SA Accredited Professionals and NSW Registered Environmental Assessment Planners (*REAP Scheme*)
- Planning with Country work including engaging with the *Planning with Country Knowledge Circle* and the strong focus on Country at PIA's National Congress in Melbourne in 2024
- Diverse advocacy actions including contributing to the Australian Government's *National Urban Policy* consultation draft which was launched by the Minister at Congress
- Launch of PIA's *Become a Planner* website, marketing collateral and advertising campaign promoting planning as a career choice in plain English to young people.
- Volunteer efforts on Board Committees, including David Kovic (independent member of the Finance, Audit, and Risk Management Committee), 10 non-director members on the National Education Committee, and 14 non-directors on the Policy and Advocacy Committee
- The operating surplus achieved in 2024 which reinforces PIA's strong financial position and opens opportunities for strategic investment
- Continued membership growth
- Great organisational culture and volunteers
- Priorities for the future, including improving advocacy and professional development offerings, attracting future planners, and pursuing policy topics such as housing affordability and climate change, and delivering the best member services

The Chair welcomed questions. None were received.

6. Financial Statements and Auditor's Report

The Chair asked that the Financial Statements and the Auditors Report for the period ending 30 June 2023, as previously distributed to Members, be tabled and be taken as read.

The CEO was invited to speak on PIA's financial statements and audit process.

The audit was conducted by Nexia Australia. No adjustments were required, and no procedural or control issues were identified.

PIA has built strong cash reserves over several financial years through prudent financial management, and is now able to plan modest and affordable deficit budgets to enable investments in significant strategic projects. These projects will lift the Institute's impact and benefit members, planners and the planning profession, and will include things such as a new on-demand training platform, enhanced advocacy capabilities,

continuation of the *Become a Planner* campaign, and a new internal membership management system.

The Chair opened the meeting for questions on the Financial Statements and Auditors Report. Two questions were received about PIA's 2025 Congress in Darwin: one about its expected financial performance and consequent financial planning, and the other about the possibility of online attendance. The CEO responded and touched on the use of PIA's financial reserves, and that online attendance will not be an option as face-to-face networking is a core aspect of the Congress experience.

There being no other questions, the Chair declared the Financial Report of the Institute for the year ended 30 June 2024 together with the declaration of the Directors, the Directors' Report and the Auditors' report as received and considered.

7. Amendments to the Constitution

Special Resolution 1: Young/Emerging Planners

The Chair explained the requirements for a special resolution to pass and that voting would be conducted via a Poll.

The Chair took the Explanatory Note for the resolution as read and explained the key points behind the proposed change, being:

- The Young Planners conducted research and made a case to the Board to change the name of the Young Planners group to *Emerging Planners*
- It builds on the work of previous Young Planner Directors, reflects the changing nature of the profession as people choose planning as a career later in life, and is consistent with naming conventions of other built environment associations
- It reflects how the "Young Planner" cohort wants to be known.

The Chair acknowledged Andrew Holmes (Young Planner Director), the Young Planner Director predecessors, and Dot Hepburn (ACT Young Planner Convenor) for their determination and leadership of this change.

The Chair proposed that the Constitution of the Planning Institute of Australia be amended by changing references to "Young Planners" to "Emerging Planners" throughout, and that the amended Constitution be adopted at the end of the Annual General Meeting 2024.

Moved: Darren Crombie

Seconded: Ed Wensing and Jenny Rudolph

All proxies voted in favour.

A Poll was conducted, and all votes cast were in favour except for one (1) vote which abstained.

The Chair declared the Special Resolution carried.

The Young Planner Director thanked all the Young Planners who worked on and supported the project.

Special Resolution 2: Cessation of Membership

The Chair explained the requirements for the special resolution to pass and that voting would be conducted via a Poll.

The Chair took the Explanatory Note for the resolution as read and explained the key points behind the proposed change, being:

- In 2024, PIA sought advice about the extent of disciplinary powers that the Board could use in relation to Code of Professional Conduct complaints
- It was recommended that PIA's Constitution be updated so that the Board is able, in rare and limited cases and on the recommendation of a Code of Professional Conduct Investigation Panel, to expel members who have not upheld the Code
- This is consistent with other built environment institute Boards such as AIA and AILA who already have this power
- It was further recommended to tidy up the Constitution to remove any doubt about when a member ceases to be a member, such as when they have not paid their membership fees
- Some other minor amendments were also tabled.

The Chair invited questions from the floor. A Member present, who had served on a PIA Investigation Panel, spoke in support of the amendment.

The Chair proposed:

1. That the Constitution of the Planning Institute of Australia be amended to:
 - a. clarify the cessation of membership section and make it clear that membership or associateship ceases if membership fees have not been paid within the required timeframe;
 - b. give the Board the ability to remove Members and Associates from the Institute when recommended to do so by a PIA Code of Professional Conduct Panel; and
 - c. make additional minor amendments.

by:

- i. deleting the existing sections 8.5 Cessation of Membership and 8.6 Continuing Liability;
- ii. inserting a new section 9 Cessation of Membership or Associateship (which incorporates the content from section 8.6 Continuing Liability);

- iii. making a variety of minor amendments such as updating definitions, section numbering, removing facsimile as an option for lodging proxy forms, and minor grammatical corrections.
2. And that the amended Constitution be adopted at the end of the Annual General Meeting 2024.

Moved: Darren Crombie

Seconded: Stephen O'Connor

All proxies voted in favour.

A Poll was conducted, and all votes cast were in favour except for one (1) vote which abstained.

The Chair declared the Special Resolution carried.

8. General Business

PIA received several suggestions of items of business from members ahead of the AGM. The Chair explained the process of filtering the suggestions, and then invited the CEO to respond to the items that had been circulated with the Notice of Meeting. Some items had been combined under broader headings.

8.1. Future planners and planning education

Jobs and Skills Australia has recently confirmed the national shortage of urban and regional planners (last year it was classified as a regional shortage). PIA is aware of, and has taken this issue up further, in the past 12 months.

Despite the shortage, university courses are under pressure and planning courses have been closing. These challenges are not unique to the discipline of planning as fundamental structural changes to higher education are impacting programs more broadly. PIA has initiated several strategies to help address the problem, such as:

- Conducting research to spotlight the problem (State of the Profession report published September 2023)
- Advocating in a direct and forceful way for universities to retain programs and for governmental investment to help support more sustainable university programs (resulting in a win in South Australia with combined state and federal funding and the re-introduction of an undergraduate planning degree)
- Launching the *Become a Planner* campaign to promote planning as a career choice to high school students, with an online presence and many PIA members volunteering to visit schools to speak about planning as a career. (Members can sign-up via the www.becomeaplanner.com.au website)

- Convening a roundtable with planning educators in 2025 to unpack the future of planning education, how PIA can help respond in the changing landscape of higher education, and what else can be done to tackle the challenges facing the university sector.

The CEO acknowledged the work of PIA's National Education Committee in accrediting courses and supporting university programs that PIA is involved with, and the outgoing committee chair, Imogen Featherstone.

8.2. *Affordability of membership and PIA events*

Australians are facing significant cost of living pressures. Over the last 5 years PIA management and the Board have been mindful about membership fee increases, firstly with COVID-19 and recently with inflation pressure. PIA has kept fee increases at or below inflation (as measured by CPI) for the past few years.

PIA is now investing in a number of strategic projects which will have benefits for members, such as the on-demand training platform which will host free content for members, and an enhanced policy and advocacy voice to deliver greater impact (which is in direct response to feedback from members), and a new membership system to deliver greater services to members. This will all require PIA to run deficit budgets for a period of time to cover the costs.

PIA also recently increased the non-member fee for certain events but held the member fee steady, to reflect the special benefits that members are entitled to.

8.3. *More regional events*

The CEO explained the distribution of members in Australia, the in-person events we've held recently in regional areas, the challenge of balancing the number of regional and metropolitan events, and PIA's annual online Rural, Regional and Remote Conference.

A question was received from the floor about capacity for PIA to have a membership officer attend events to engage with members. The CEO described the current and future role of PIA's new Membership and Engagement Team.

8.4. *Centralisation of planning*

PIA raised the issue of a National Settlement Strategy in 2016 which speaks to the heart of this question, and urged Australia to plan beyond political and budgetary cycles. PIA had some initial success with bipartisan support in 2017 and a Federal Inquiry undertaken with recommendations that the Government in conjunction with States and Territories should develop a plan for settlement. But despite that recommendation, no Australian government has taken up the recommendations.

Recently we've been partnering with the Regional Australia Institute to elevate the issue for better population and settlement planning for regions and cities.

A new senate enquiry may also be on the horizon for this issue.

PIA's CEO is also an expert member of the Australian Government's Urban Policy Forum to help draft that *National Urban Development Policy* that looks at all urban areas, not just capital cities. The final version should be released soon. The next *State of Australian Cities Report* should also provide more national data about Australia's 20 largest urban areas, the majority of which are not capital cities. This will give us new opportunities to talk about the importance of settlement planning, growth in regional communities, and the important work planners do.

9. Inauguration of Emma Riley RPIA (Fellow) as PIA National President

The CEO recognised and celebrated outgoing National President Darren Crombie's 10-years of service on the Board, including the last 4 years in the National President role.

The Chair thanked the CEO, and welcomed Emma Riley as the incoming PIA National President, commencing in the role at the close of the meeting. Emma thanked the Chair and spoke briefly about her vision for the term ahead.

8. Announcement of 2024/25 Board

The Chair gave sincere thanks on behalf of the Board to retiring Directors Imogen Featherstone (ACT) and Andrew Holmes (Young Planner Director).

The following new Directors were appointed by the Board for two-year terms:

- Emma Riley RPIA (Fellow) National President
- Amy Wilkins PIA (Assoc.) Young (Emerging) Planner Director

The following new directors have been elected to serve on the Board:

- Sandra Hogue RPIA (Fellow) TAS
- Peter Johns MPIA ACT

The following director's term expired this year, and he was re-elected unopposed:

- Stephen Smith RPIA (Fellow) SA

The following directors continue to serve on the Board:

- Chay Garde MPIA NT
- Ray Haeren RPIA (Fellow) WA
- Laura Murray RPIA VIC
- Rukshan de Silva RPIA NSW
- Wendy Evans MPIA (Fellow) QLD

To summarise - the Board of Directors for 2024/25 is:

- Emma Riley RPIA (Fellow) President
- Amy Wilkins PIA (Assoc.) Young (Emerging) Planner Director

- Wendy Evans MPIA (Fellow) QLD
- Chay Garde MPIA NT
- Ray Haeren RPIA (Fellow) WA
- Sandra Hogue RPIA (Fellow) TAS
- Peter Johns MPIA ACT
- Laura Murray RPIA VIC
- Rukshan de Silva RPIA NSW
- Stephen Smith RPIA (Fellow) SA

10. Questions

The Chair invited questions from the floor about any business of the meeting, or the management of the Institute. None were received.

11. Close

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and the PIA management team for facilitating the AGM. Concluding that there were no other matters to be considered by the Meeting, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Meeting closed: 7.17pm

I confirm these minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Signed:

Date: