



# Partners in Aid

AUSTRALIA

## PARTNERS IN AID ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Held via zoom on Thursday, 25 November 2021 at 7.00 pm

### 1. OPENING & WELCOME

The Chair opened with an Acknowledgement of Country.

**2. PRESENT:** *Wilane Pis-o, Chris Gillies, Anne-Marie Maltby, Caryl Hertz, Lyn Pickering, Ian Pickering, Bob Baldassa, Nicholas Foster, Jacquie O'Brien, Cecily Neil, Roger Hughes, Jessica Gill, Kiril Dimovski, Dan Pagoda, Glenys Hughes, Andrea Pickering*

**3. APOLOGIES:** *Beryl Dickinson, Lorraine Baxter, Marjorie White, Dr Anne Myers, Amanda Stone*

### 4. DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No

### 5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM MEETING

*There were no comments on the Minutes.*

*Motion: That the 2020 AGM minutes be accepted*

*Caryl Hertz – Moved*

*Roger Hughes – Seconded*

*All approved*

### 6. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

*Cecily Neil. Acknowledged the contributions of our Partners in Aid donors. This year has been particularly difficult for donors – a number of regular donors have reduced or stopped their funding due to the impact of COVID on their income or on that of sons or daughters. To these donors, and all Partners in Aid contributors who have been impacted by COVID, we wish them a brighter 2022.*

*Despite the impact of COVID, due to several large one-off donations, our income this year actually increased a little. However, we ended up with a deficit of \$1,000, that necessitated dipping a little into our reserves. This was due to a donation to Philippines to pay for PPE for Sinangpad Association health workers and health workers in the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project communities, and to the initiation of the new project in Sri Lanka.*

*COVID-19 lockdowns made 2021 another difficult year for Partner Organisations attempting to implement community projects. COVID has also had tragic personal impacts - president for Sinangpad Association recently lost her husband. However, none of our Project Partners have given up – they and have tried to continue to implement their projects in some way.*

*For some time we have been talking about extending our operations – Sri Lankan project which Jacquie will discuss has now been initiated and has the potential to lead to a new partnership. A donation was also made to fund sanitary facilities for preschool in Kiribati – unfortunately the toilet design that the I-Kiribati NGO provided did not meet basic standards, and after some negotiation this potential project was abandoned.*

*Any serious attempt to establish new partnerships overseas will not be possible until we increase our funding capacity. We have started a DFAT accreditation process, if this is successful we will have the potential to fund several new projects.*

*Chris Gillies and Jess Gill decided to resign after this AGM. During her time with PIA, Jess acted as secretary, liaised with a company that offered to modernize our logo and worked on updating the website and Newsletter. Chris put in a lot of work in developing a new strategic plan, as well as accepting responsibility for external compliance reporting. We are indebted to Jess and Chris for the enduring work they have done. We currently have expressions of interest for people wishing to join the board to replace these two directors.*

*Thanks are also due to a number of other people who have helped with the operations of PIA throughout the year. Three volunteers Kiril, Manet and James have all been really helpful on the Marketing and Communications Committee. Bob Baldassa helped with risk management and joined with Jacquie O'Brien on new Risk Management Committee. Nicholas Foster has continued effectively as Treasurer. Lyn and Ian Pickering continued to provide our registered office and handle incoming communications. Lyn also directed the SEDS Child Education Sponsorship. Roger Hughes, Anne-Marie Maltby and Amanda Stone all continued to work on the projects for which they are Project Coordinators. Andrea Pickering continued to help with much of the financial work. Thank you once again to all our donors and supporters – thank you so much, looking forward to a strong 2021.*

*Thank you to Cecily the chair for being such a guiding force for Partners in Aid and working on a lot of the operational tasks in the background.*

## **7. FINANCE**

### **a Treasurer's Report**

The auditor's report has been received and circulated.

Motion: That the auditor's report for 2019/2020 be accepted

Moved: Nicholas Foster          Seconded: Bob Baldassa

All in favor: Yes

*Another similar year once again in Melbourne in lockdown – things largely on hold. The income remained similar to previous year. There was a slight increased income, but the year ended with a slight deficit overall. The hard work of the Marketing and Communications Committee resulted in some innovative ideas and an increased social media presence – we continue to see new channels for income streams. WE hope to see an increase in funds over the coming year so that we do not need to dip into reserves again. Our administrative costs remain a low 5.6%, partly due to the fact that we have had no travel expenses this year. Thank you to Andrea for doing all the accounting. Looking forward to more growth as we come out of lockdown.*

**b** Appointment of Auditor

Motion: That the current auditors be appointed for 2021/2022

Moved: Nicholas Foster          Seconded: Cecily Neil

All in favor: Yes

## **9. REPORTS**

**a** India – SEDS – Child Education Sponsorship

*Amanda is not here to report on the Sustainable Agriculture Project. Lyn will comment on the sustainable agriculture project.*

*Parents in India have been hesitant to send children away from homes. SEDS PIA child education program has restarted- students have shown their excitement to come together. This past year ~\$49,000 has been raised. New clothes where possible are made by women – very fortunate to have such a good working relationships with SEDS. Paperwork and reports are available – regular monitoring of the work is important hasn't been possible in the last 2 years due to COVID. Thank you to the team in India to ensuring that the child education program continues as smoothly as it currently does. We look forward to a more positive 2020 for everyone.*

**b** India – ABWU

*ABWU is continuing to function on a reduced basis. The house mothers and staff – health workers attend where necessary. ABWU provides support for women and girls and is located adjacent to several slum areas. Non profit organisation – providing shelter to disadvantaged women and children. Provides services counselling, legal aid etc. Partnership provides assistance to those from abusive or destitute backgrounds. Currently 44 sponsored girls. Of these 31 are living at ABWU – 8 have not returned from their homes. Although ABWU has a broad scope – PIA is limited to assist goals with education and vocational training skills. Expenditure - \$11,2008 ABWU has some staff and funds provided by the government. PIA funding assists with remedial, vocational and tertiary education such as dance. Emphasis has been on keeping girls healthy and active. In the early stages of the pandemic – some cases within the program. Now finished exams, waiting on results. Some new girls have joined*

*which we will transfer funding from those girls who have not come back. We hope things will return to normal for next year.*

*There is not quite the same reliance on us in this project – they have other government funding and NGOs. The government funds the fundamentals now. Most of the people who have been sent there have been sent there by the courts. There are some funny cases- children of prostitutes in jail or mentally ill mothers and deserted families – where the mother can't look after them. It is one of the most respected places in India. There are sponsors who have sponsored the girls for some time – we don't want to break that relationship – huge proportion of the money from sponsorship if it didn't go to ABWU it wouldn't go anywhere. A number of sponsors are shared between SEDS*

*c Sri Lanka – Y Gro*

*Y-Grow – project followed discussions between Y Gro and PIA it started in June 2021 as a 1 year project and aimed to enable and empower widows – it aimed to assist them to venture into diary farming industry. Project is spread across 2 villages- support has been really important -project follows larger government commercial program – commercial milk production from large farms. Y Gro already has some experience in this regard. Depending on progress it may develop to an ongoing partnership. At the moment too early to say. Hope to see much more happening and we hope to continue the partnership. People at Y Gro have also been really responsive which is really positive so they could be good partners in the future.*

*d Bangladesh – Symbiosis*

*PIA has been operating in Bangladesh since the 1960s – continually evolving, has been moved on to become more a partnership. For the last 20 years we have been dealing with an organisation called symbiosis. Symbiosis is supported by another Australian organisation. Conduit for enabling symbiosis – decided by the board that that it is time of us to move on and find another project. Trouble in Bangladesh in which we are advised not to visit. For that reason – we have been looking into our other projects in Sri Lanka.*

*We have two projects in Bangladesh – first of them is the Garma training program – training not just in textiles – atm concentrate on textiles. Symbiosis has been running training in sewing – helping trainees to purchase sewing machines. It is very hard to tell we aren't quite certain what is going on those areas at the moment as the reporting has not been ideal. The project also has other aspects – with the virus though – project in the north of the country has been greatly affected by the virus. In the spirit we have adopted in Australia – greatly appreciated. Other project is the river development project – supports a community on an island which is susceptible to being washed away. Varies in length and width. We also have been very lucky with the schools on the island – the covid virus doesn't seem to have made it there. Seems to have remained free of the virus – schools on the mainland have been affected. We are finishing up this current year – and we have notified them that we will be finishing up.*

e Philippines – Sinangpad

*The Singingpad – run by volunteers/health workers. Lockdowns have stopped most of the activities that were hoped to achieve this last Financial year. The pandemic affected project implementation and the president and her husband were admitted to hospital and the hospital passed away.*

*There are 7 municipalities and one small city – there are 150 villages. The total population in 2020, 220,000 there are 5 main tribes and a number of sub tribes. Occasional outbreaks of arrest amongst tribal groups.*

*We have achieved zero open defecation in one municipality since its inception. A total expenditure of 15,000 was transferred to the healthy village project during the FY. Money was allocated for PPE. We are very strict about money donated to particular projects and that money going to that project. Kalinga is short of PPE equipment – much of the Singinpad work is done by health workers. This PPE has been distributed in rural centres. In addition to that – approx. 16,500 still remain and carry out from the previous financial year. Of this approx. 100,000 cases were spent during this financial year. A full audited financial statement for 2020/2021 has been promised. This project has always been very good for financial records. Travel restrictions made it impossible to implement – in the usual process training and community mobilization. Singingpad was able to organise the construction of some household toilets in some municipalities. Singingpad is working closely with the community to – all villages have received grad 2 certificates where everyone has a toilet. They have been able to achieve something even though the capacity has been diminished. Sustainability evaluation – we really want to continue the project and evaluate other villages to see whether outcomes have been maintained or not. Given the inability to implement activities due to COVID – a new proposal has been approved by the board. Funding scheduled – time and opportunity to visit again. Despite the limited progress s- when Kalinga returns to normal this health village project will continue to save the lives of people.*

*Annie M – we need to pass on our best wishes to Rose*

f India – SEDS – Natural Resource Management and Livelihoods with Promotion of Farmers' Groups

*Lyn – SEDS report for 2021. Sustainable agriculture project – SEDS works in southeast coast of India. PIA worked here since the 1990s. In 2020 SEDS and PIA signed a new agreement for 2 year project commence July 2020. This project aims to manage low carbon farming. A new project proposal is currently being developed. Population is 450,000 people. Angrapadesh – main issue is drought. Inadequate water is a significant problem. Rainfall is highly erratic. Man made desert – decades of deforestation. String of tanks – some of which are over 500 years old. SEDS started working in this area – these farmers are left out of development. SEDS envisions a harmonious society to harness the skills of the people while respecting the environment. SEDS has chosen to build low carbon farming skills for people in this area to enhance the natural resources in this area. Without people doing agriculture in a sensitive way. Tanks have multiple uses – food, fish, fodder, and silt that can be used for the soil. Our work leads to higher crop yields, and improved water replacement, talk desilting, water management, fish seeding and tree planting are important projects. Total project funding \$48,600. Two payments in 2021 financial year – new banking regulations stopped money transferred*

*until September this year. During 2020/2021 India continued to be affected by lockdown. Some of the intended activities were selecting a village for tank desilting, seeding tanks, training to farmers, establishing a seed bank. In between lockdowns villages completed the desilting of tanks. Heavy rain in 2021 helped to replenish tanks and ground water but destroyed some crops. Training was provided in September for sustainable agriculture. Things are now proceeding more or less normally. 30 villages were selected for the program. Within these villages, 500 farmers have been trained. It is possible future lockdowns will disrupt the program – board will need to be flexible in the future to support. Issue of bank transfers resolved. Project going 2 years finishes in June.*

*No questions for this project*

## **10. NOMINATION & ELECTION OF BOARD FOR 2021**

- a Retirement of 1/3 of Board Members, in accordance with the Constitution.  
Dr Chris Gillies and Jessica Gill will retire as Directors of the Board and not renominate.  
The Board notes that the following Board member is retiring as the Director elected longest ago on the Board, and is seeking re-election: Roger Hughes

*Accordingly, the meeting notes that the following members have nominated for re-election: Roger Hughes.*

*Motion: That Roger Hughes be re-elected to the Board*

*Moved: Lyn Pickering Seconded: Bob Baldassa*

*All approved – Yes*

- c. Bob Baldassa, Jacquie O'Brien, Nicholas Foster, Caryl Hertz, Cecily Neil and Lyn Pickering will continue as members of the Board. Two vacancies remain to be filled.

*We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the considerable contribution that both Jess and Chris have made to the functioning of the Board over the last years.*

*Moved: Cecily Neil*

*Seconded: Bob Baldassa*

*All in favor: All approved*

## **11. GENERAL BUSINESS**

*Cecily Neil – We are thinking of organizing a group trip end of next year to Sri Lanka and India to incorporate project visits.*

*Board meeting to happen in January to reconfirm the Treasurer, the Secretary and Chair etc.*

## **12. CLOSE**