

Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 24 October 2023

Via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair, Mr Tony Lawson opened the AGM at 11.30am and acknowledged the traditional custodians of the many lands from wherever members are watching the webinar (him being on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri People), and paid his respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging.

It was noted that approx. 20 members have joined the AGM. He introduced the Board Directors and acknowledged Board member, Allison Willis, who joined online.

Mr Lawson then focused on the housekeeping and logistics of the meeting followed by the agenda. He reiterated that only voting members can vote on proceedings but all members, including non-voting members, will have an opportunity for questions at the conclusion of the formal proceedings.

2. Chair's overview

Mr Lawson presented his Chair's overview of the 2022-23 year, noting that it had been a challenging year in which CHF incurred an operating loss of approx. \$590,000. It was noted that the Board had made the decision to meet this deficit from the company reserves to ensure ongoing business viability and retention of staff.

A small surplus is expected for the 2023/24 financial year with the positive the result of the last Federal budget, at which \$10.5M was allocated to CHF over a four-year period. This funding will enable CHF to undertake major transformation in the coming years, primarily assisting the Federal Government with the implementation of strategies and programs resulting from the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce outcomes.

CHF is going through a process of recruiting new staff to meet the needs of the programs funded by the Federal Government which include the 60-day dispensing program (60DD) as well as the introduction to My Medicare and accessing bulk billing for GPs. CHF will be advocating for consumer input with the Department of Health and the Minister of Health.

Mr Lawson thanked the Minister and Department for the increased funding that has been received as evidence of CHF's capacity and capability for being the voices of Australia for health consumers.

Retiring Board members, Mary Patetsos and Roxanne McDonald, were thanked for their contribution to the Board and reference was made to newly elected Board members (refer agenda item no. 5)

Mr Lawson advised of Dr Elizabeth Deveny's appointment as the new CEO who commenced with the organisation during the 2022-23 financial year. He thanked Dr Deveny and her team for the continued efforts of CHF meeting its emission and the positive expectation for a successful year through 23/24.

Linden Audino, Returning Officer, was also thanked for his continuous contribution to the Board ensuring that the Directors are well prepared to carry out their official duties.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 22 November 2022

Mr Lawson noted that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22 November 2022 which had been distributed to Voting Members prior to the meeting. He provided members with the opportunity to write any questions in the chat. No questions were raised.

Resolution: That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22 November 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

- **Moved:** *Ros Chataway*
- **Seconded:** *Jan Donovan*
- The resolution was **CARRIED**.

4. Financial matters

Mr Lawson introduced Jan Donovan, Chair of the Finance Audit and Risk (FARM) Committee, who reported on CHF's financial outcomes in 2022-23.

Ms Donovan acknowledged the traditional custodians of the many lands on which they were meeting on the lands of the Ngunnawal People, and paid respect to the Elders, past, present, and emerging, and especially welcomed all Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in attendance.

An overview of the 2022-23 financial year was provided and it was reported that it has been another year of change and challenges for CHF. Reference was made to the significant drop in both project income and grant funding which resulted in a \$591,325 deficit. This led to the Board agreeing to access the cash reserves to ensure continuity of the business which in turn affected a decline in equities for the last financial year.

A positive outlook for the future is forecast thanks to the new CEO's efforts to move slowly from project-based funding to program based fundings and also due to the allocation of \$10.5M over a period of four years in the last Federal budget. New CHF led consumer programs will commence in the 2023-24 financial year. The implication for CHF over the next financial year of this outcome includes certainty of more resources being recruited to ensure CHF has the right

skills mix for implementing the new consumer programs. A small surplus is expected in the 2023/24 financial year.

Ms Donovan reported on several internal changes taking place to develop the organisation and ensuring that CHF can deliver a high quality of consumer led work.

CHF is strengthening its internal controls through restructuring the internal finance team. It was noted that two new staff (qualified accountants) have been appointed.

Furthermore, the Finance and Risk Committee has agreed to a risk appetite process to ensure that the Board is fully informed of current and future risks to the organisation and have appropriate mitigation strategies are in place. An additional independent member with appropriate financial and/or management skills will be appointed to the committee in the next few weeks.

Ms Donovan commented on the retirement of CHF's alliances accountants, Maya Cina and Karen Groves. CHF also farewelled Board Director, Mary Patetsos, during the financial year. All three were thanked for their contribution to CHF.

A special thanks was given to Rowan Cockerell and Ros Chataway for their continued support and diligence contribution on the Finance and Risk Committee and also to the other Board member for their continued support.

She also thanked Linden Audino for his continued secretarial support to the Finance and Risk Committee. Lastly, she thanked the Federal Government the Health Minister, Mark Butler, for their ongoing support and all the members who joined the AGM online today.

Resolution: That the audited annual accounts for the financial year 2022-23 be adopted.

- **Moved:** Christine Walker
- **Seconded:** Rowan
- The resolution was **CARRIED**.

5. Declaration by the Returning officer of the result of the poll for vacancies on the CHF Board

Tony introduced Linden Audino, who reported on the outcome of the three vacancies on the Board. Elections were held in September which resulted in three successful candidates. Ros Chataway and Christine Walker were re-elected for another 3-year term and a new director, Mr Darryl O'Donnell, has been appointed to the CHF Board. Mr O'Donnell's apology for today's meetings was noted and the Board is looking forward to formally welcoming him at the next meeting.

Mr Lawson extended his congratulations to all three successful candidates.

6. Amendments to the Company Resolutions

Jo Watson, Deputy Chair and Chair of CHF's Governance Committee provided an overview of the proposed resolution changes as outlined in the AGM pack provided to voting members.

Ms Watson gave background on the proposed changes noting that the Governance Committee takes it upon itself to review the constitution not just against best practice for NFP organisations but also in terms of the way CHF supports its members in terms of clarity for their services to CHF.

Reference was made to the AGM pack which highlighted the constitution changes, some requiring simple editing and others rewording of particular clauses, ensuring that in an ongoing way the constitution is serving the interest of the members and the Board of Directors. Voting members were given the opportunity to place any questions in the chat.

Ms Watson then considered the constitutional changes as proposed and having been provided to the voting members as tabled. It was noted that this resolution is acting as one resolution for the purpose for all the editing and all of the markings set out in the document provided.

Clare Mullen, Health Consumers Council, W.A. raised the question in regard to adopting a hybrid style approach for future membership meeting, events, functions.

It was reported that the Board and management a hybrid approach will continue to be offered for the various functions. CHF is keen to support its members to come together in whichever way they think is more suitable.

It was noted that Yvonne Parnell made a comment that she agreed with Clare. It would be good to see the members though and have opportunity to ask questions in person etc.

Ms Parnell's comments were taken onboard for CHF's next AGM

Resolution: That the proposed amendments to the Constitution of CHF as set out in Appendix A be adopted by Special Resolution. It was noted that all voting members/proxies have passed this resolution.

- **Moved:** Christine Walker
- **Seconded:** Ros Chataway
- The resolution was **CARRIED**.

7. CHF 2023 Annual Report

Mr Lawson advised that all voting members will be receiving a link to the 2023 Annual Report in the next week's newsletter. It will also be posted on the CHF website.

The Board and members noted the Annual Report.

8. Other Business

Tony offered members the opportunity to raise any questions about today's proceedings

- *Clare Mullen, Health Consumers Council, W.A. raised a further question relating to the funding received at the last Budget, in particular, whether W.A. will feel the impact of those additional funds.*

Feedback was provided on the national rollout of the 60 DD program which was already making a positive impact in W.A. for consumers. There will also be opportunities for W.A. and other state peaks to take part in the Strengthening Medicare program. With CHF being

a national organisation, it is imperative that engagement with all states will bring benefit to members, consumers and stakeholders across the country.

- *Ms Claire Mullen also raised a question to the Directors around if there are any plans for CHF to engage more with consumers and the peaks states/territories, specifically Western Australia.*

Mr Lawson advised that Dr Deveny in her role as new CEO is in the process of engaging with the relevant state peak bodies and has a program in place to ensure this engagement continues.

- *Another question from Clare Mullen related to how the wider consumer network can continue to engage deeply with the national reforms. So many people experience schism between State and Federal systems – it would be great if we could continue to strengthen our relationships as peak consumer bodies.*

Mr Lawson reported that there is work going on currently in relation to the national health reform agreement. CHF would welcome significant changes to the basis on which decisions are made. Unfortunately, there seems to be an emphasis on hospital bed funding and not as much as there should be on community-based funding. CHF is advocating in that space as much as possible and it is hoped to see good change over time.

He assured Ms Mullen that as a national peak organisation CHF highly values the role the state peak and will continue to do.

9. Meeting close

There being no other business, Mr Lawson closed the meeting at 12.08pm. He thanked everyone who attended the AGM. Members will be kept informed of the positive challenges with the additional funding through the various communication channels.

SIGNED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD

24 October, 2023