

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AUSTRALIA LIMITED ACN 127 396 945 (COMPANY)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Thursday 4 November 2021

Time: Commencing at 5:30pm AEDST

Location: Zoom Conference

1 **Welcome to Country**

Aunty Georgina Nicholson began with a Welcome to Country. She welcomed attendees to her Country, that of the Woi Wurrung language of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation alongside sharing with members her people's and her family's connection to the land, sea and the importance of awakening language. She paid her respect to Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining the meeting.

The President extended a warm and sincere thanks to Aunty Georgina Nicholson for welcoming everyone to Country and began by acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land. She paid respect to the Elders past, present and emerging and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining the meeting.

2 **Meeting Opening**

The President welcomed attendees to the Occupational Therapy Australia Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2021. The President declared the meeting open from 5.30pm.

2.1 **Apologies & Proxies**

Quorum was achieved by 5.30pm when the Welcome to Country commenced.

Attendees

Member Name

Jasmine Allason
Karlle Bell
Joaquin Benedicto
Chris Birtles
Michelle Bissett
Ralda Bourne
Lisa Chan

Member Type

Financial Member
Financial Member
Financial Member
Financial Member
Financial Member, Board Director
Financial Member
Financial Member

Claire de Jager	Financial Member
Judith Donald	Financial Member
Linda Elliott	Financial Member
Priscilla Ennals	Financial Member, Vice President
Mary Evatt	Financial Member
Janine Franz	Financial Member
	Financial Member, WFOT First Alternate Delegate
Emma George	Delegate
Anita Hamilton	Financial Member
Carol Jewell	Financial Member, OTA Staff member
Sandra King	Financial Member
Philippa Lawrence	Financial Member
Vincci Lee	Financial Member
	Financial Member, Board Director, WFOT Delegate
Adam Lo	Delegate
Paul Marsh	Financial Member, Vice President Finance
Annie McCluskey	Financial Member, Board Director
Carol McKinstry	Financial Member, President & Chairperson
Sarah McMullen-Roach	Financial Member
Carmen Mitchell	Financial Member
Matthew Molineux	Financial Member
Joanna Murray	Financial Member, Board Director
Michelle Oliver	Financial Member, OTA Staff member
Nicole O'Reilly	Financial Member
Katrina Pacey	Financial Member
Tracey Parnell	Financial Member
Linda Roche	Financial Member
Debbie Scarfe	Financial Member
Rebecca Smith	Financial Member
Jen Sperring	Financial Member
Vicki Tillott	Financial Member
Nicole Vuillermin	Financial Member
Helen Walker	Financial Member
Jess Wallace	Financial Member
Margaret Wallen	Financial Member
Lee Zakrzewski	Financial Member

Invitees

Georgina Nicholson Wurundjeri Land Council (for Item 1 Only)

Staff Members

Samantha Hunter Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Erin Eades GM Corporate Services, Minute-taker
Michael Barrett GM Government & Stakeholder Relations

Lauren Jensen	GM Marketing, Communications & Membership
Lea Rawlings	Chief of Staff/Executive Advisor
Rebecca Meyer	GM National Events, CPD & Business Development
Lauren Ritchie	Corporate Services Coordinator
Cynthia Noh	Senior Accountant

Apologies

Leanne Healey	Board Director
Karen Brown	Financial Member
Kim Walder	Financial Member

Proxy appointments

Elizabeth McHugh	Chairperson
Karen Brown	Chairperson

2 Minutes

The President noted that, as at previous Annual General Meetings, members are not required to confirm the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.

In line with OTA's process the Minutes from this meeting will be placed on the website for three weeks and following this, will be presented to the Board for confirmation.

3 President's Report

The President began by acknowledging the challenging year for all Australians due to the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic. She noted that despite these challenges, OTA has had one of its most successful years not only by navigating the changing immediate landscape for both allied health and associations but also looked to the future to develop a new strategy.

The President then formally launched OTA's first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to members. She informed members that this first RAP is a cornerstone of OTA's broader Journey to Understanding and formalises our commitment to reconciliation. This Reflect RAP provides the Association, Board and staff the framework to develop deep mutual respect, strengthen and repair relationships and to ensure our Association is a culturally safe and welcoming organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The President acknowledged that the first Reflect RAP is a culmination of a body of work from multiple groups and individuals and thanked everyone for lending their time, cultural and clinical knowledge to this important piece of work.

The President then highlighted key items from the 2020-21 reporting period including:

- The delivery of the OTA experience in a virtual environment including the National Conference, OT Exchange and much of our CPD offering which has provided greater flexibility and equity to members across the country.
- The rapidly changing policy environment at both the state and national level has resulted in the doubling of the number of staff working on advocacy issues pertinent to the profession.
- The Professional Practice team's ongoing response to the evolving immediate crisis and provision of assurance and advice to members across all practice areas has meant growing the size of the team and significantly the number of OTs on staff.
- The Australian Occupational Therapy Journal increased its impact factor from 1.278 to 1.856 and thanks were given to Professor Louise Gustafsson, the Editorial Board, and the volunteer reviewers for this outstanding achievement.

Finally, the President thanked everyone who contributed to this very successful year including the OTA Board, Divisional Councils, CEO Samantha Hunter, OTA staff and members.

4 **CEO's Report**

The CEO opened by acknowledging the traditional owners of all the lands on which the Association and its members live and work.

The CEO was pleased to present the 2020-21 annual report to members in what has been another year of change and uncertainty for members, the communities and clients they serve, and for OTA staff.

She informed members that OTA has continued to forge ahead in cementing its future as a sustainable, responsive and highly relevant allied health association with the development of a new strategy and an ambitious operational plan which encompasses raising the profile of members, ensuring appropriate technology investment for the future, and forward-thinking research to provide a road map for the profession in critical areas.

The CEO presented some key highlights from the year including:

- Membership has grown, up 9% overall and a 90% retention rate demonstrating that members see the value in unity in representation.
- Diligent financial management has led to three consecutive years of strong positive growth for the Association.
- Growth in staffing at OTA across Professional Practice, Policy and Advocacy and Corporate Services, Finance and Governance teams broadening OTA's capability and capacity to deliver and support members.

The CEO gave her profound gratitude to the members who tirelessly dedicate their skills and expertise through the Board, Journal Board, Divisional Councils, Reference and Working Groups, Committees and Taskforces, who speak on OTA's behalf at inquiries and forums and convene Special Interest Groups. She noted that the Association quite simply could not operate without this support.

The CEO summed up by thanking the staff who have stepped into uncertainty and embraced change to continue to support our members and the profession. She noted the organisation-wide excitement for the possibilities for the profession as we move into the year ahead and her immense pride at the achievements over the past year.

5 Financial Report

The Vice President Finance informed members that this reporting period represents a full financial year impacted by the pandemic. He reported that the Board and management had taken a conservative approach to the budget at the onset of COVID-19 based on projected uncertainty for the immediate future.

The Vice President Finance was pleased to announce that, due to diligence, careful planning and monitoring of the budget, and robust financial investment strategy, a record surplus had been garnered by the Association. He informed members that revenue increases can be attributed to increased membership numbers and improved member retention, an increased uptake of CPD via online learning, and revenue was further enhanced by hosting three national events within this financial year.

He provided some further highlights including:

- Due to the continued focus on building OTA's financial health, the Association is in a strong position with a current liquidity ratio of 3.09.
- The financial performance results reflecting \$6,395,149 in revenue offset by \$4,358,956 in expenses, resulting in a net surplus of \$2,036,193. This represents a 144.51% increase on the previous financial year.
- Total assets amount to \$10,931,042 of which \$7,716,072 is in cash and term deposits. Total liabilities equate to \$2,625,655 of which \$1.87 million relate to membership and CPD income received in advance.
- Net asset trends (assets minus liabilities) remain positive, with a balance of \$8,305,387 at the end of the reporting period, 30 June 2021.

The Vice President Finance noted that OTA's strong record of financial accountability and management make the delivery of our new strategy possible, and the benefits for members tangible.

In conclusion, the Vice President Finance congratulated and thanked fellow Directors, the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee, the CEO and Senior Account

Cynthia Noh, for working collaboratively to achieve such a strong result in challenging and uncertain times.

6 Questions Pertaining to the Presidents, CEO, Vice President Finance and the Annual Report

The CEO and President provided answers to the following questions raised by members prior to the AGM.

How did OTA come to decide upon the statement released relating to vaccination of health care professionals? Were OTA members surveyed regarding OTA's position?

The Association received a high volume of member queries relating to their obligations, their risk and responsibilities to themselves, their staff and their clients. Throughout the pandemic what has resonated through the allied health sector has been the inconsistency for practitioners across the nation. The Association called for standardisation across the country and as a health care profession, the Association does believe in the efficacy of vaccination.

The Board endorsed the released statement and as members would appreciate, the Board is elected to act on behalf of the membership, making hundreds of decisions each year. Not every decision is met with agreement by all members however the Board makes decisions based on what it believes to be the best interests of the profession at all times. The membership was not surveyed on the matter. Operating during a pandemic, the Board determined to act in a way that was most expedient in the circumstances.

In light of the TGA's emergency use authorisation, together with reports of life changing adverse events associated with these treatments, what risk assessment was done to determine all OTs in all settings should be vaccinated? Has OTA considered other methods of risk mitigation i.e. rapid antigen testing?

Statements such as those released by the Board are by nature blunt instruments and there will always be exclusions. The Association would always recommend that occupational therapists use their clinical judgement to determine their own professional and personal risk and to follow the advice and instruction of the orders under which state they operate.

Our federal registration body AHPRA's position statement uses the words "strongly encourage" in relation to health practitioners and COVID-19 vaccinations. Why is OTA taking a different approach to AHPRA by calling for mandates?

AHPRA is a federal government authority and OTA is an association independent of government. From time to time we do hold different views.

The Australian Government Department of Health states that "The COVID-19 vaccine is voluntary and free and your information and privacy are strictly protected." This is in stark contrast to the implications and reality of mandates where, despite the sanctity of personal health information and confidentiality, OTA members would be expected to divulge their 'vaccination status' to employers and

possibly clients. How does OTA envisage preserving member privacy while simultaneously calling for mandates?

Many employers have always had conditional employment terms including provision of police checks, working with children checks or flu vaccination. OTA does not view this conditional employment requirement in a different light to existing employment conditions. OTA always ensures that we abide by privacy legislation and do not devolve member details.

Did OTA receive any financial incentive or bonus in association with their communication with members regarding COVID-19. If so, what was the purpose and the amount of the funding?

No. OTA has not received financial incentives or bonuses in relation to our COVID-19 communications. OTA has received the financial stimulus packages available to businesses of our size during the pandemic. This was not tied to expectations of support for state or federal government policies.

Given that OTA would be aware of the limited availability of services in regional areas, have you considered the impact and risk to vulnerable clients who cannot access services due to further reduced staffing and loss of expertise within the profession? How do OTA intend to support all members to maintain registration and working capacity within appropriate risk assessment?

OTA does not anticipate a large reduction in the occupational therapy profession and does note that vaccination is currently conditional on some workplaces but is not mandatory across the profession and vaccination is not contingent on registration status. Members can continue to be supported by contacting our Professional Practice Team.

I recently attended the OTA webinar with the HR consult regarding mandating of COVID vaccines. Thank you for organising and the opportunity to attend this. During the webinar questions were submitted, however no responses have been received - will these questions be addressed? How will they be addressed? If OTA will not be addressing these questions, why not?

Questions placed in the Q&A function were answered at the time. This was articulated at the commencement of the webinar. The chat function provided a forum for members' discussion and was not monitored for this purpose. Any outstanding questions relating to obligations to staff and your responsibility to providing a safe workplace can still as always be directed to Workplace Plus. If members have any questions which remain unanswered at the end of today, please place these in writing to the Association addressed to the CEO.

Will OTA advocate for ongoing registration of occupational therapists through AHPRA regardless of vaccination status in order to uphold the principles of autonomy, human rights (of both the therapist and client), and equality?

The Board is not aware of any plans for AHPRA to alter their registration requirements at this time.

Has the Board considered occupational deprivation for OTs who can no longer practice due to not having the vaccine?

It is our understanding that at this time, there is no restriction to registration or practice unless vaccination is a condition of employment as directed by your employer.

Will OTA accept any responsibility or provide any compensation to a member who may suffer any adverse reactions to the mandated COVID-19 vaccination and have potential loss of income due to this?

No. OTA is not a vaccination provider.

An OTA survey was recently circulated to members. Will OTA be publishing the results of the survey? If so, when can members expect to receive them?

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey as it is important OTA has good data to inform its decisions. The results from the recent member survey are being collated and we are awaiting a formal report on the results. From there, OTA will publish a high-level summary of results in upcoming member communications which is likely to be in the new year.

Could OTA please provide an update on the issue of the NDIS referring clients to claim from their OT's when AT fails/circumstances change etc.?

OTA understands that this is of concern to members and whilst we pursue further dialogue with the NDIS on this matter we remind all members of the importance of rigorous and thorough documentation to ensure you are protected in case of any action by any client whether NDIS funded or privately funded and remind members to immediately contact their insurer should this circumstance arise. A fulsome communication has been made available to members today on this topic.

I understand OTA are currently working on NDIA's proposal to downscale fees – thank you. An update would be welcome with regards to progress, and whether travel will be more realistically reflected going forwards.

The NDIA is undertaking its annual pricing review. We will be making a submission, as we do each year, and the NDIS National Reference Group will be

meeting in the coming week to discuss the matter and the extent of consultation to be undertaken, being mindful that submissions are due to the NDIA by 28 November. OTA will be sure to remind the agency that the time and expense of doing NDIS work is great and that any reduction in fees will likely see a sizable proportion of service providers leave the scheme. OTA encourages all affected and interested members to provide the Policy team with case studies in order to illustrate the current challenges of the system.

Is OTA funded only by membership fees or from any other bodies, e.g. government, etc?

OTA is funded by key revenue streams including Membership (49%), CPD (15%) and Conference income (17%). OTA also received COVID Stimulus income from government in line with many businesses throughout Australia including:

- the Job Keeper payment from July to December 20 allowing us to continue to support our staff throughout the depths of the pandemic; and
- a payroll tax grant which waived OTA's payroll tax expense for the financial year.

As a result, COVID Stimulus income was 8% of total income for FY20/21 or a total of \$497K.

One member was delighted to learn from the annual report of one of the good news stories from our shared COVID experience which was the significant profit for the association. The member noted that this is a history making moment in terms of the high value of the profit. Could the Board outline please how this \$2 million will be utilised? Could consideration be given to investing 20% of that surplus for long term possibilities?

The Board has signed off on an ambitious organisational plan that addresses immediate priorities which include investing in technology that supports the Association, its staff and members and positions us as a digital first organisation. We have other projects which require significant investment such as our Thinking Ahead Paper on Mental Health which positions the profession for the future. As mentioned earlier, OTA has invested in additional staff of particular note in Policy & Advocacy and Professional Practice which we know are of immense importance to the membership, and in a project publication which raises the profile and understanding of the profession. Much work is being undertaken to position the profession for the future including work on advanced scope of practice and a supervision program.

The Board has the appropriate processes including a risk appetite and investment strategy in place which guide the management of investments and provide an adequate liquidity ratio for future sustainability as well as an allocation for innovation.

How can members be involved in the allocation of this windfall? Could there be online meetings for members and some Board members to engage in dialogue of potential projects and priorities? This sharing of ideas is likely to be more engaging as a working together strategy than a survey.

The current strategic plan was developed in response to COVID and as such is short spanning from now until 2023. Work on the next strategy will commence in early 2022 and members can expect the opportunity to engage with the Board and staff on matters of importance to members. We do anticipate that this will take a variety of forms including forums and roundtables. The Board is committed to funding projects which meet the strategic objectives whilst making an impact for the profession and the communities we serve. We look forward to our members participation throughout 2022 on shaping the future of the Association.

In the Financial Statements the amount for rental has increased \$8,000 since last financial year, why is this?

The actual net increase in rental expense is \$3,000 and changes in the rent figure come from accounting standards for leases which were introduced in July 2019, effective from Financial Year 19-20. We expect a further reduction in the coming financial year as we transition to a flexible, work from home, hybrid workforce.

Could you please highlight where the Rae Street funds are allocated in the Financial Statements?

Rae Street Funds now total \$922,302.57 which returned \$42K interest income with a total ending balance of \$964K. Our Senior Accountant will be in contact with this member to assist with understanding how this is accounted for in our audited accounts.

Could you please outline what is included in the 25% of income stated as 'other' in the financial statements?

Other income streams are advertisement income, interest income, royalties, sponsorship income, commissions and partnership income and project revenue.

The CEO opened the floor to questions without notice. These were submitted by the Q&A function and read out by the CEO and President.

How many OTs are now employed in the National office?

There are 7 occupational therapists currently employed by OTA.

Does OTA find it important to support OT's who are experiencing Occupational Deprivation? If yes, how does Occupational Therapy Australia plan to support Occupational Therapists who are experiencing Occupational Deprivation at the moment due to an inability to work under current public health orders?

This question was answered earlier in the questions taken on notice.

If we add more staff based on the additional staff, can OTA assure members it can maintain the ongoing increase in total staff costs?

The CEO and President assured members that OTA was in a sound financial position and are actively managing the necessary staff to continue to deliver and expand upon member benefits in a sustainable manner.

Does OTA think it knows better than AHPRA and the Federal Government when it comes to recommending, versus mandating COVID vaccination?

No. OTA understands the clear jurisdiction of AHPRA and OTA remains independent of the Federal Government.

7 Ratification of Appointment of Auditor

The President informed members that, as is customary each year, OTA seeks members support to ratify the appointment of our Auditors.

Motion: That MGR Accountants are ratified as the Auditors of Occupational Therapy Australia Limited.

Moved by Paul Marsh, seconded by Priscilla Ennals.

Passed with a majority - 36 votes in favour including 2 proxy votes to the Chairperson.

The President thanked members.

8 Announcement of Board

The President passed the chair to Vice President Priscilla Ennals to announce the composition of elected members due to her re-nomination for another term as a Director.

The Board appointments were overseen by the Nominations Committee and the Vice President thanked Nominations Committee members for their work.

The Vice President informed members that the following people have joined the Board:

- Carol McKinstry has been reappointed

- Paul Marsh has been reappointed
- Michelle Bissett has been reappointed
- Joanna Murray has been reappointed
- Katrina Pacey has been newly appointed.

The Vice President informed members that the following people remain on the Board:

- Adam Lo
- Leanne Healey
- Priscilla Ennals

The Vice President handed the chair back to the President who congratulated the reappointed Directors and welcomed new Board Director Katrina Pacey.

The President thanked outgoing Director Annie McCluskey for her two terms of service including on a variety of Board subcommittees. Her attention to detail particularly on the Finance Risk and Audit Committee was greatly appreciated by the Board.

9 Final Statements

The President thanked everyone for their attendance and interest and stated that OTA looks forward to members' continued support in the coming year. She thanked the team, particularly the CEO, for producing the Annual Report and managing the meeting today.

The President thanked members again for the opportunity to continue to represent the profession.

10 Close of Meeting

The President declared the meeting closed at 6.27pm.