

# Rationalist Society of Australia Inc. 2017 Annual General Meeting

---

**DATE:** Thursday 5 October 2017  
**TIME:** 7.30pm, with dinner at 6pm  
**VENUE:** Upstairs function room at the "505 Wine Room"  
505 Malvern Road, Hawksburn 3142.

## Business of the Meeting

### 1. Formal matters

**Chair:** Meredith Doig was elected Chair of the meeting

**Apologies:** David Higginbotham, Will and Barb Darvall, Hugh Sargeant, Graham McGill

**Proxies:** 31 proxies were received, 16 in favour of the Chair; 15 in favour of Meredith Doig.  
See list next page.

#### Members present

1	Meredith Doig	13	Les Allan
2	Len Buller	14	Nicholas Wade
3	Debbie Kearns	15	Sam Mason-Smith
4	David Stimson	16	Jonathan Meddings
5	Judith Hoy	17	Mathew Withoos
6	Hugh Wilburham	18	Brett Davis
7	Rosemary Watson	19	Robert Ralph Traill
9	George Leighfield	20	Robbie van Dijk
10	Abi Bellamkonda	21	Sujai Thomman
11	Tristram Chellew	22	Tosca Lloyd
12	Don Humphries		

**Quorum:** there being more than 10% of financial members present in person or by proxy, the Chair declared a quorum achieved.

## Proxies

1	Aziz	Islam	Chair	17	Brian	Morris	Meredith Doig
2	Craig	Sankey	Chair	18	Clive	Parrett	Meredith Doig
3	Greg	Norton	Chair	19	David	Higginbotham	Meredith Doig
4	Michael	O'Keefe	Chair	20	Hugh	Sergeant	Meredith Doig
5	Rohan	Navaratne	Chair	21	Kevin	McDonald	Meredith Doig
6	William	Greer	Chair	22	Peter	Consondine	Meredith Doig
7	Mark	Taylor	Chair	23	Peter	Sabatino	Meredith Doig
8	Ilse	Beilharz	Chair	24	Rex	Williams	Meredith Doig
9	June	Blanchett	Chair	25	David	Freeman	Meredith Doig
10	John	Hayman	Chair	26	Dominic	Kelly	Meredith Doig
11	Rex	Ennis	Chair	27	Jason	Kimberley	Meredith Doig
12	Derek	O'Reilly	Chair	28	Jason	Ball	Meredith Doig
13	Robert	Faulds	Chair	29	John	Downey	Meredith Doig
14	Peter	McCutcheon	Chair	30	Ian	McDonald	Meredith Doig
15	Lyle	Allan	Chair	31	Robert	Traill	Meredith Doig
16	Graziano	Birgi	Chair				

## 2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM

Minutes of the 2016 AGM had been circulated.

**Motion 2.1:** That the Minutes of the 2016 AGM be accepted as a true record.

Moved: Hugh Wilburham      Seconded: David Stimson      Carried.

There was no formal business arising from the last AGM.

## 3. Reports

### President's Report

President Meredith Doig spoke to her written report – see **Attachment 1** – highlighting in particular the appointment of the RSA's first full-time paid employee.

**Motion 3.1:** That the President's report be noted.

Moved: Samuel Mason-Smith      Seconded: Leslie Allan      Carried.

### Treasurer's Report

The President said the RSA's investments remain sound, under the guidance of the Financial Advisory Subcommittee. There have been no unusual transactions to bring to the attention of

Members. She foreshadowed that Members should expect a decrease in the Society's invested funds over the next 12 months, as we draw down on them to pay for our full time employee. However, over the next few years we will be focusing on increasing donations and instituting a bequest campaign to ensure the Society's financial basis remains firm.

The Financial Statements are at **Attachment 2**.

**Motion 3.2:** That the Treasurer's report be adopted.

Moved: Robbie Van Dijk

Seconded: Len Buller

Carried.

#### **4. Election of a Committee**

Chris Fotinopoulos resigned from the board in January 2017, due to the pressure of work commitments, creating a casual vacancy on the Committee of Management. In accordance with 57 (a) of the RSA Rules, the Committee appointed Robbie van Dijk to the casual vacancy.

Rohan Kapitany and Tristram Chelley chose not to renominate for the Committee for 2018.

There were seven nominations received for the Committee for 2018. There being no other nominations, the Chair declared the following elected until the 2018 AGM:

Len Buller, Leo Brewin, Meredith Doig, Robbie Van Dijk, Hugh Harris, Jonathan Meddings, Mathew Withoos.

#### **5. General business**

Nil.

#### **6. Next Meeting**

The next AGM will be held between 1 July and 30 November 2018. The Committee of Management will decide the actual date and notify members at least 21 days prior.

Meeting closed at 9:30pm.

## President's Report 2017

The most important and exciting development of the past year has been the employment of the RSA's first full time, paid Executive Officer. Tosca Lloyd joined us in June 2017, fresh from five years in London, where she was among the first cohort of students at AC Grayling's New College of the Humanities. Having graduated from the College with a first class honours philosophy degree, Tosca went on to complete a Masters degree in Human Rights at University College London before returning to Australia. Tosca has already made a major difference to the RSA's campaigns and behind-the-scenes administration and we look forward to her raising the RSA's public profile to become the go-to voice for secularism in Australia.

### Campaigns

---

Last year the board invested in a professionally facilitated strategic planning workshop. As a result, we chose four campaigns to focus on for the year. And, there were the usual *ad hoc* campaigns we supported as well.

#### Sensible drug law reform

During 2016-17, the Victorian parliament conducted an inquiry into drug law reform and the RSA made a significant submission to it. While there are many other organisations with deeper knowledge of this field than us (eg, the long standing group *Family and Friends for Drug Law Reform*), our submission focused on the irrationality of continuing the failed policy of drug prohibition. Of recent months, we have been actively collaborating with a range of groups calling for the trial of a medically supervised injecting centre to help curb the alarming increase in drug-related deaths in Melbourne.

#### Body integrity

RSA Vice President Jonathan Meddings, and colleague Travis Wisdom from South Australia, authored an RSA White Paper on Genital Autonomy, which was professionally printed by the RSA and distributed widely to politicians and interest groups. Jonathan and Travis presented their paper at the Humanist Convention during the year, to great acclaim. Travis and his PhD supervisor also had a paper on non-consensual, medically unnecessary male circumcision published in the well-respected online daily *The Conversation*, which mentioned the RSA.

#### Rationalist curriculum

After previous successful lobbying, the Victorian Government has introduced a new F-10 curriculum called "Learning about Worldviews", which covers the five major world religions *and* secular humanism/rationalism. The RSA has kept in close contact with the relevant bureaucrat in charge of this initiative and we commissioned Monash University curriculum expert Dr David Zyngier to contribute the 'rationalism' aspect to the first lessons being developed.

## The Irrationals

Work has continued preparing for a new award to be called The Irrationals, with a launch due next year.

## Dying with Dignity

Following the year-long Victorian parliament inquiry into End of Life Choices, to which the RSA made a significant submission, we have been campaigning actively in collaboration with Dying with Dignity Victoria to ensure RSA members contact their local MPs to urge a favourable vote when the draft legislation is debated in the parliament. After decades of overwhelming public support, this is the best chance yet for positive reform.

## Census

The results of the 2016 census were released mid-year and the RSA was prominent among those celebrating the significant increase in the number of Australians positively choosing “No Religion”.

## The Reason Project

Conscious that the RSA has a mission to educate the public about the benefits of rationalism, over the past year we have been working on a new website called the Reason Project. RSA member James Fodor has contributed a significant amount of content to this website, explaining for an interested lay audience, epistemology (what is knowledge), aspects of evidence, and logical reasoning.

## Communications

---

### Media articles

Around 20 articles written by RSA board members have been published in the mainstream media, on topic ranging from secular education and scripture, to scientology and Santa. Check them out on our website.

### Public meetings

The Rationalist Think Tank monthly meetings have continued with around 15 attendees at each meeting. Thanks to RSA member Peter Sabatino, similar meetings have been trialled in Perth, WA.

### *Australian Rationalist Journal*

We continue to publish the *Australian Rationalist* on a quarterly basis under the editorship of professional journalist David James. The last year featured cover stories on the modern relevance of the ancient philosophy of Stoicism; controversial advocate for Western liberal values, Ayaan Hirsi Ali; an analysis of the modern challenge to the authority of experts; and the emerging confrontation between America and China.

## RSA Daily

Our daily curated bulletin RSA Daily continues to attract subscribers, up 10% (from 423 to 466) with the number of views up more than 20% (from 35 000 views to 43 000).

## Website

The RSA's new Executive Officer has updated the website to make it more intuitive and friendly for readers.

## Social media

The RSA maintains a Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn presence, with updates on a daily basis.

## Occasional emails

And we sent out 29 occasional newsletters during the year (last year 25).

## Administration

---

The RSA Board has met every two months during the year, with the Financial Advisory Committee and the Editorial Committee meeting on a quarterly basis.

## Investments

---

The Society's funds continue to be governed by a Financial Advisory Committee, comprising the President, the Treasurer and the RSA's *pro bono* Accountant, plus two professionally qualified independent experts, reporting to the main Committee. Following a prudent 'passive' investment policy, our funds have grown steadily over the past year.

Members should note that during the 2017-18 financial year, we are likely to see a decrease in the amount of funds invested, as we draw down to pay for our full time Executive Officer and the lease on a shared office space in Melbourne's CBD. However, over the following few years we will be mounting campaigns to restore these funds through donations and bequests to ensure we maintain a healthy financial foundation.

## The Board

---

Thanks and appreciation are due to long time Board member Rohan Kapitany, who tried valiantly to maintain his connection to the board from Oxford, where he has a three year post-doc appointment, but who finally gave in to the tyranny of distance; and to Chris Fotinopoulos, who moved from Melbourne to Ballarat and also withdrew due to the pressure of work and distance and TJ Chellew. We welcomed Robbie van Dijk to the board during the year, filling the casual vacancy left when Chris withdrew.



Dr Meredith Doig, President

## Financial statements

# Not For Profit - Association Report

Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.

ABN 41 853 904 693

For the year ended 30 June 2017



# Contents

3	Income and Expenditure Statement
5	Assets and Liabilities Statement
6	Notes of the Financial Statements
8	Movements in Equity
9	True and Fair Position
10	Certificate By Members of the Committee
11	Compilation report

# Income and Expenditure Statement

Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.

For the year ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
<b>Investment Income</b>		
Investment Income	75,438	88,263
<b>Total Investment Income</b>	<b>75,438</b>	<b>88,263</b>
<b>Member Revenue</b>		
Member Donations	4,705	700
Membership Fees	18,124	11,361
<b>Total Member Revenue</b>	<b>22,829</b>	<b>12,061</b>
<b>Revenue from operating activities</b>		
Event Revenue	-	4,205
Journal Subscriptions & Sales	5,001	4,048
<b>Total Revenue from operating activities</b>	<b>5,001</b>	<b>8,253</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>103,268</b>	<b>108,577</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>103,268</b>	<b>108,577</b>
<b>Gross Surplus</b>	<b>103,268</b>	<b>108,577</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<b>Campaign Expenses</b>		
Campaign expenses	95	10,000
Commissioned Reports	1,100	1,600
Minor Collaborations	500	750
Reason Project	7,625	5,533
Think Inc	-	5,500
<b>Total Campaign Expenses</b>	<b>9,320</b>	<b>23,383</b>
<b>Employment Costs</b>		
Superannuation	165	-
Wages and Salaries	3,439	-
<b>Total Employment Costs</b>	<b>3,604</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>General Expenses</b>		
Finance Charges	347	313
President's honorarium	11,875	7,500
Statutory Reports	-	54
<b>Total General Expenses</b>	<b>12,222</b>	<b>7,868</b>
<b>Journal Production Costs</b>		
Authors and Contributions	1,687	1,340
Editors Fees	17,925	15,125
Journal Design Fees	5,300	4,900

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

	2017	2016
Journal Posting and Mailing	5,190	4,410
Printing Journal	18,499	15,185
<b>Total Journal Production Costs</b>	<b>48,600</b>	<b>40,961</b>
<b>Marketing</b>		
Marketing	12,354	2,903
<b>Total Marketing</b>	<b>12,354</b>	<b>2,903</b>
<b>Office Expenses</b>		
Admin Officer's Fee	1,250	1,998
Legal expenses	-	608
Meeting Expenses	512	476
Office Expenses	2,102	1,683
Printing & Stationery	1,845	-
Telephone & Internet	296	-
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>6,005</b>	<b>4,765</b>
<b>Speaking Tours</b>		
Boghossian Tour Expenses	-	2,571
<b>Total Speaking Tours</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,571</b>
<b>Website Expenditure</b>		
Domain Registrations	-	187
Web Hosting & Maintenance	220	1,064
Web Services	485	390
<b>Total Website Expenditure</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>1,640</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>92,810</b>	<b>84,090</b>
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>10,458</b>	<b>24,486</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

# Assets and Liabilities Statement

Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.

As at 30 June 2017

	NOTES	30 JUN 2017	30 JUN 2016
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>			
Cash at Bank		15,401	2,337
Distributions Receivable		44,048	52,698
DRP Residual		-	5
Franking Credits Receivable		4,563	7,429
PayPal		2,172	883
<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>66,183</b>	<b>63,352</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>66,183</b>	<b>63,352</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Direct Share Investments		77,688	66,057
Managed Funds		727,266	775,510
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>804,954</b>	<b>841,566</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>871,137</b>	<b>904,918</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Employee Entitlements		1,904	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,904</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>1,904</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>869,233</b>	<b>904,918</b>
<b>Member's Funds</b>			
<b>Capital Reserve</b>			
Asset Revaluation Reserve		14,176	60,319
Current Year Earnings		10,458	24,486
Equity		684,505	660,019
J R Howard bequest		160,094	160,094
<b>Total Capital Reserve</b>		<b>869,233</b>	<b>904,918</b>
<b>Total Member's Funds</b>		<b>869,233</b>	<b>904,918</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

# Notes of the Financial Statements

## Rationalist Society of Australia Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2017

### Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act Victoria. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity as there are no users dependent on the general purpose financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

### Income Tax

The Rationalist Society of Australia Inc is a registered organisation with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC). The committee has completed the "Endorsement review worksheet for income tax exempt charities" and concluded that no change in the eligibility criteria occurred during the 2017 financial year or in the subsequent months after year end.

Having satisfied the eligibility criteria of a Tax Concession Charity (TCC) as prescribed by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), the financial reports for the 2017 financial year have been prepared on a tax exempt basis

### Employee Provisions

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee provisions have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

### Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

### Cash on Hand

Cash on hand includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

## **Revenue and Other Income**

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received.

Dividend and interest income are recognised on a cash basis.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

## **Financial Assets**

Investments in financial assets are initially recognised at cost, which includes transaction costs, and are subsequently measured at fair value, which is equivalent to their market bid price at the end of the reporting period. Movements in fair value are recognised through an equity reserve.

# Movements in Equity

## Rationalist Society of Australia Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
<b>Equity</b>		
Opening Balance	904,918	820,113
<b>Increases</b>		
Surplus for the Period	10,458	24,486
Other Increases	(46,143)	60,319
<b>Total Increases</b>	<b>(35,685)</b>	<b>84,805</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>869,233</b>	<b>904,918</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements. These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.


# True and Fair Position

**Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2017**

## **Annual Statements Give True and Fair View of Financial Position and Performance of the Association**

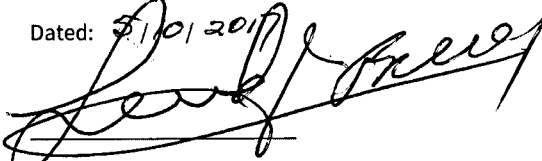
We, Meredith Doig and Len Buller, being members of the committee of Rationalist Society of Australia Inc., certify that –

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Rationalist Society of Australia Inc. during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2017.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Meredith Doig - President

Dated: 5/10/2017

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Len Buller - Treasurer

Dated: 5/10/2017



# Certificate By Members of the Committee

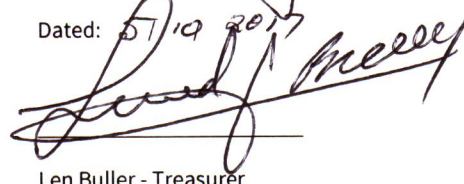
**Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2017**

I, Meredith Doig and Len Buller certify that:

1. I attended the annual general meeting of the association held on *5/10/2017*
2. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2017 were submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.

  
Meredith Doig - President

Dated: *5/10/2017*

  
Len Buller - Treasurer

Dated: *5/10/2017*

# Compilation report

## Rationalist Society of Australia Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2017

Compilation report to Rationalist Society of Australia Inc..

We have compiled the accompanying special purpose financial statements of Rationalist Society of Australia Inc., which comprise the asset and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2017, income and expenditure statement, the statement of cash flows, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes. The specific purpose for which the special purpose financial statements have been prepared is set out in Note 1.

### The Responsibility of the Committee Member's

The committee of Rationalist Society of Australia Inc. are solely responsible for the information contained in the special purpose financial statements, the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information and for the determination that the basis of accounting used is appropriate to meet their needs and for the purpose that financial statements were prepared.

### Our Responsibility

On the basis of information provided by the partners we have compiled the accompanying special purpose financial statements in accordance with the basis of accounting as described in Note 1 to the financial statements and APES 315 *Compilation of Financial Information*.

We have applied our expertise in accounting and financial reporting to compile these financial statements in accordance with the basis of accounting described in Note 1 to the financial statements. We have complied with the relevant ethical requirements of APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants*.

### Assurance Disclaimer

Since a compilation engagement is not an assurance engagement, we are not required to verify the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the information provided to us by management to compile these financial statements. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or a review conclusion on these financial statements.

The special purpose financial statements were compiled exclusively for the benefit of the committee who are responsible for the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information used to compile them. We do not accept responsibility for the contents of the special purpose financial statements.



Brett Davis - CPA

Dated: 29th September 2017