DOWNER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Monday 25 November 2024

6PM BBQ IN THE SQUARE
As in previous years, the AGM was preceded by a Community BBQ in the Square, and this year's was attended by 35-40 people.

7PM AGM:

1. WELCOME, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY – Robyn Rennie, Convenor.

After the welcome and acknowledgment Robyn also thanked Amit Barkay and John Gulpers for their preparation of another delicious BBQ.

2. MYWAY PLUS PRESENTATION AND Q&A

Guest speaker Mark White from Transport Canberra spoke briefly and responded to questions about the impending launch of Canberra's new public transport ticketing system and online platform, MYWAY plus.

Mark said this upgrade will give easier options for fare purchases and live updates on schedules; there will be a grace period to June next year, to allow time for people with Senior's Cards to adapt to new purchase methods; "Free Fridays" mean no fares will be charged each Friday to encourage people to use public transport. Mark encouraged exploration of the website https://www.transport.act.gov.au/tickets-and-myway and to call 131710 if online difficulties are experienced. He expressed hope that thorough testing means teething issues will be minimal.

Community member Sue Dyer showed posters about the MyWay + changes that are available in Canberra's public libraries. Sue said she thinks these explain the new system helpfully.

3. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES – Robyn Sirr, Secretary

APOLOGIES: Leon Arundell; Denys and Jenny Garden; Sam Hussey-Smith; Aniko and Peter Carey; Suzanne Pitson.

ATTENDANCES: Kevin Herring; Pam Harders: Ilse Jamonts; Sue and Steve Dyer; Peter Comisari: Alan Murray; Bea Brickhill; Simone Gray; Ilka Carter; Frank Mills; Barbara Burns; Bob Bylo; John and Vicki Godwin; Manik Datar; Jane Teasey; Fran Parker; Graham and Sharon Chinner; Ian Bagnall; John Gulpers; Miles Boak; Amit Barkay; Jacqui Pinkava; Robyn Sirr; Robyn Rennie

4. 2023 AGM MINUTES ACCEPTANCE – Robyn Rennie

Acceptance moved by John Gulpers. Seconded by Miles Boak. **CARRIED.**

5. CONVENOR'S 2024 SUMMARY REPORT – Robyn Rennie

Robyn presented her report, and provided its text for the minutes:

DCA has had another very busy year and I would like to thank all of the committee for the work they have done in 2024.

One of our major issues is that we still don't have our formal 5-year peppercorn Lease. We do have a letter of comfort! We have continued to send numerous emails and phone calls to the government concerning this. Because of this we have been reluctant to spend too much money on improvements at the Centre in case DCA will not be the managers in future.

Some of our major events and achievements this year include -

- *With changes to positions on the committee it was agreed to change our banking arrangements from the Commonwealth Bank to Beyond Bank which improves our access and requires 2 members to approve expenditure. With the closure of the Commonwealth bank this has been a real plus as much of our banking can now be done online.*

- *In February we finally appointed a Centre Coordinator - Amy Barthet, a wonderful addition to the DCA. Amy, working with Amit have the Centre running very efficiently.*

- *To improve the efficiency of bookings for the centre Amy and Amit explored new booking systems and we are now using SpacetoCo. This is working really well for both clients and the centre coordinator.*

After 22 years of hosting Clean up Australia at Downer, we had a very disappointing turn out this year: there were only seven participants (four of which were DCA committee members). The Committee has since set up a planning sheet for future 'Clean Ups,' as we acknowledged there had not been enough promotion of the event this time round. We warmly welcome offers of help both in promoting and participating at next year's Clean Up on Sunday 2 March - just contact us!

- *We continue to work with the Dickson Tradies with Ricky Newham coming to visit the Centre to see the air conditioners that they had contributed $15000 in a grant for the replacement of the gas heaters. We are currently obtaining quotes for replacing the Venetian blinds in all rooms and sound reduction in the East room. We will then request a grant from the Tradies to assist in purchasing the necessary items.*

- *Once again, we participated in suburban Floriade, thanks to our Downer gardeners. Who have also been very busy, replacing the turf in the centre as well.*

- *The DCA has continued to support the various Park groups in the suburb including providing a water container for the Fenton/Cotton St group which are working with the preschool to provide water for the new plantings.*

- *In September we delivered a DCA newsletter to all households in Downer. This is the first printed one in several years. Many thanks to Denys and Jacqui for creating the newsletter, Peter and Aniko for printing and the volunteers who delivered them. BUT thanks to Jacqui anyone on our email list has been kept up to date during the year with anything involving Downer residents and DCA. So if you are not on the list I suggest you provide us with an email address so you can stay up to date.*

- *Letters have been written to Access Canberra and politicians concerning the poor quality and, in some places, total lack of footpaths especially in relation to accessing the Light Rail.*

- *There have been several ideas presented at our regular meetings by Downer residents e.g. basketball court, seats around Downer. We have supported ideas and directed residents to appropriate contacts. Subsequently we will be updating our guidelines for our own DCA community*

grants program offering up to $10 000 for Downer residents to develop any projects that would benefit the Downer community.

There have been the usual maintenance issues with toilets, gardens, library boxes and frog pond but these have been very well managed by Amit, Jacqui and Miles with assistance from Denys and Jim.

Thanks go to Jacqui, who keeps our clunky but informative website up to date. Hopefully improving the website will be one of our projects in 2025. Our committee minutes over the years are now in the ACT History Archives thanks to Denys Garden.

Thanks also go to Leon Arundell who has kept our Facebook page up to date with new events and happenings around Downer.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a lovely Christmas and a happy 2025.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT – Miles Boak

The Treasurer, Miles Boak presented the report from the auditor, Graeme Lindner. Miles said that the auditor confirms that the accounts are properly drawn up to fairly present the affairs of the DCA for the year ended 30 June 2023, and overall are in healthy state.

The total income for the financial year was $55,470 and total expenses (largely utilities, wages and grants disbursement) was $42,002, resulting in a surplus of $13467. The accumulated funds 30 June 2023 was $87,326.

Full details of the accounts are in the auditor's report, copies of which were available at the meeting and will be filed onto DCA website. This report will be submitted to the ACT Government as required under the Associations Incorporation Act.

Miles acknowledged the efforts of Amit Barkay and new Centre Coordinator Amy Barthet in improving the Centre's functioning, noting their role in instigating the Centre's new online booking system, SpacetoCo. Amit responded to queries about this, noting that it provides detailed information and helpful analysis on booking trends in its regular income reports.

Miles thanked his wife Natalie for coaching his treasurer skills, and also past treasurer Steven Sedgwick for assistance with provision of reports to Auditor.

Motion to accept the Auditor's Report- Graham Chinner; Seconded – Amit Barkay -
CARRIED

Motion to appoint Graeme Lindner to be Auditor for 2024/2025- Sue Dyer; Seconded- Jacqui Pinkava.
CARRIED

Robyn Rennie reiterated that as we have a healthy financial situation, community grants are available for Downer residents to propose community and environment enhancing projects. Also noted was our reluctance to do any major improvements to the building as we do not yet have an ongoing lease.

7. ELECTION OF THE 2025 COMMITTEE

The following 9 nominations were received for the 2025 DCA Committee:

Robyn Rennie	Peter Comisari
Jacqui Pinkava	Miles Boak
Amit Barkay	Leon Arundell
Robyn Sirr	John Godwin
Manik Datar	

As the Constitution allows for up to 10 members, there is a vacancy.

8. DCA CONSTITUTION UPDATE – Robyn Rennie on behalf of Leon Arundell

The reason for motion to update Constitution was outlined, that the constitution needs to include a clause regarding resolution of any disputes that arise within the association membership. This is as a result of updates to the Associations Incorporation Act, Section 65B now requiring associations to have dispute resolution procedures.

Robyn referred those present to two Options for amendment that had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the agenda, denoted as Options A and B. Robyn read each of these out to the meeting and asked for a show of hands on preferred option.

Option A was voted for unanimously by a show of hands. **CARRIED.**
Option A- The association will act in accordance with section 65b of the Act in addressing any dispute under the Act or under these rules between: ka member and another member, or a member and the association.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Footpaths to Downer Centre from Bradfield Apartments – Barbara Burns

Barbara asked if the Committee could advocate for new paving to provide smooth access for pedestrians coming to the Centre from Bradfield St developments, as current surface is unsealed and uneven. Miles from the Committee said that issue of appropriate footpaths was raised by DCA Committee during the DA process, and was told that paving will be done to Access Standards when construction is complete.

9.2 Toilets at Downer Centre – Ilke Carter asked for an update on repair of toilets at Downer Center, noting that it needs repainting and the door lock doesn't function properly.

Miles said that inadequate toilets at Downer Centre have been an ongoing issue; the toilets are not in accord with accessibility standards; the walls built in the 1930s lack the stability needed for easy modification; there has been recurrent advocacy over the years to ACT politicians; the Heritage classification of the building also makes change difficult.

Miles noted that Kurrajong Labor MLA Rachel Stephens Smith had promised new toilets for Downer Center in her successful 2024 election campaign, and the Committee will be following this up.

Miles said he will investigate the lock issue that Ilke referred to.

10. FINALLY: A formal thank-you was made by a community member at the meeting to Robyn Rennie for convening, and to the Committee for their work in 2024.

The meeting closed 8.15 pm.

Robyn Rennie, 2024 Convenor Robyn Sirr, 2024 Secretary

To be approved: AGM 2025