

## 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2024

Held online via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqde2hqTgtHtXeff8bBQsuX9l1M440RPfz>

CHAIR: KATE JONES

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

With more than seven members present, Kate Jones declared a quorum, and the meeting opened at 7:04 p.m.

**1. Present:** Kate Jones, Robyn Phelan, Janice Keen, Alfred Lowe, Jackie Gasson, Diamando Koutsellis, Brett Stone, Mark Ellis, Montessa Maack, Georgie Avis, Vicki Grima, Bernard Kerr, Matt Russell, Claire Blake, Cathy Jamieson, Jane Orme, Sally Mills, Claire Blake, Greg Daly, Marilyn Raw, Sandra Bowkett, Barbara Campbell-Allen, Chris Plumridge, Donna McDonald, Ruby Yeh, Ann Gillespie, Theresa Hay, Ursula Burgoyne, Liz Notley, Karen Wells, Susan Peachey, Simon Terry, Kerry Sanders

Members were notified that the POLL function on Zoom will be used when a motion is put. Members will then be able to vote for or against the motion. We will share the poll results after each vote.

### 2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting 27th September 2023 ([tabled](#)).

The minutes of the 2023 AGM have been available to TACA members online:

<https://australianceramics.com/assets/minutes-2023-taca-agmdocx.pdf>

**Motion:** that the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting on 27th September 2023 be accepted as an accurate record of that meeting and that they be adopted.

Proposed: Jackie Gasson; Seconded: Claire Blake ; all in favour. POLL recorded 100% acceptance.

### 3. Business arising from previous AGM 2023 minutes: None

### 4. Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 ([tabled](#)) [HERE](#), pages 24-35

The financial statements have been available to TACA members online for the last two weeks as part of the 2024 Annual report. [HERE](#)

**MOTION: That the financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 be accepted.**

Proposed: Brett Stone; Seconded Jackie Gasson: all in favour. POLL recorded 100% acceptance of 22

## **5. Annual Reports (tabled: SEE TACA ANNUAL REPORT 2024)**

### **5.1 President: Kate Jones**

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations, on whose unceded lands I live and work. I pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and to any First Nations people present today.

This time last year, I talked about transition and change; we had farewelled Vicki Grima and welcomed Debbie Pryor. I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to Debbie for her contributions over the time she led TACA. The past twelve months have continued to offer us the opportunity as an organisation to prepare for the future and clarify our goals and vision for a diverse, thriving and vibrant Australian ceramics community.

We are very fortunate that Diamando Koutsellis is heading up TACA now, and the board is grateful to her and her staff for their dedication to TACA and all their work over this period.

Over the last twelve months, we have continued to face challenges due to the insurance climate and general economic conditions. We decided to maintain the TACA office in Sydney, putting extra strain on finances, but we felt it was important for staff to have a base from which to work and collaborate. We have also had to grapple with issues that affect the arts sector more specifically. Organisations such as TACA depend on members' and staff's passion and commitment. With an ambition to act ethically and to institute best-practice employment policies, we have been working towards making TACA sustainable.

The contributions of our staff, members and community are an undeniable strength of the organisation. At this point, it seems appropriate to acknowledge my fellow board members' tremendous contributions. Their voluntary labour, arising from a passionate belief in the value of community, is essential to the functioning of TACA. Thank you to our new treasurer, Janice Keen, and Robyn Phelan, who joined our board this year. Thank you also to Hannah Kothe, Alfred Lowe and Jackie Gasson.

Despite the challenges, we are now in a position, after a couple of difficult years, to expect that next year will be a solid one and a foundation to take your organisation forward into its next era. We are filled with optimism and look forward to working together with the members and our community to continue to celebrate, promote and elevate Australian ceramics in all its diversity.

### **5.2 Treasurer: Janice Keen**

Good evening everyone, it has been a challenging 12 months.

We recorded a loss of \$24k in the 23-24 financial year. Members' equity dropped from \$251k to \$226k a drop of 12%.

This is the second consecutive year of financial loss, and the Board of TACA and our CEO take the situation very seriously. It should be noted that the structural changes to the CEO role at the end of 2023 and other cost-control measures taken in 2024 delivered a far smaller deficit than expected.

There were several compounding reasons for this loss; the main drivers were:

- Overestimate of the revenue from insurance sales
- Increased expenditure on wages that proved to be too great a burden on the income streams
- Failure to deliver cost benefits associated with decentralising the head office. It is to be noted that some cost-benefit was achieved via a negotiated rent reduction, and the board agreed to retain the office space as the best solution for the organisation overall
- Unforecasted costs related to the management restructure in early 2024 to address the deficit. (Pay out of accrued leave balances)
- A carry forward of accrued leave from years prior to 2023- 2024 year and the ongoing practice of reporting accrued leave on the balance sheet.

The structural organisational changes implemented during the year and the price rise announced for July 2024 have positioned us to deliver a balanced budget in the 2024-2025 financial year. We will monitor our finances carefully over the next 12 months and take a conservative approach to expenditure. It is our plan to stabilise financially after these years of poor financial performance and focus on delivering great value to our members in line with our Strategic Plan 24-27

#### INSURANCE

The transition to our new insurer, AON, after the unexpected cancellation of our group insurance policy in 2022 has been financially challenging. After considerable effort from the TACA Operations team, a stable and well-understood business process is in place for working with AON. We now understand the dynamic insurance environment better and will move forward confidently with our insurance offering.

#### THE JOURNAL

The Journal and associated advertising continue to make a significant and valuable financial contribution to the Association.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Membership revenue increased from 2023 levels by 3.7%. It is a positive sign that member numbers are growing from 2023.

#### OUTLOOK

The Board has been very focused on managing towards a stable and balanced budget for 2025. The organisational structure we have adopted will offer this balance and stability. The Board's Finance and Governance working group meets regularly with our CEO to monitor progress on our Key Result Areas.

The Board recognises that cost of living pressures affect our members. We are focused on delivering value to all Members and appreciate their financial support.

I would also like to thank TACA's staff, Nikki Gibson of Silver Cloud Bookkeeping and Greg Bartels and the team at Halo Accounting for their diligence in ensuring our financial processes are sound and accurate.

On a final note, for any keen observers of the balance sheet,

You may have noticed the 22/23 reported members equity dropped by \$6000 from the last AGM report to this AGM report.

An accounting error occurred in the 22/23 financial year and was discovered during the process of reporting the 23/24 year. This error caused our income to be overstated by \$6000 last year.

At the last AGM TACA posted a loss of \$43k and a reduction in members equity from \$300k to \$257k for the 22/23 year.

Correction of the error results in a loss of \$49k and members and equity of \$251k. A drop of 16%.

Thank you for listening.

### **5.3 Chief Executive Officer: Diamando Koutsellis**

Thank you to all the members who supported TACA in the past twelve months. It has been a busy year of transition. I stepped into the role as Interim CEO in February 2024 after Debbie stepped down, and I would like to thank her for her contribution. I was offered the permanent position as CEO at the end of the first six month contract and performance review.

This year, we had two successful members' exhibitions, TABLED and HELD, at the Manly Art Gallery and Museum, which was on show from 19 April to 9 June 2024. TABLED delved into the intricate relationship between food and functional ceramics, while HELD showcased the work of 90 artists. I want to take this opportunity to thank Katherine Roberts, the Senior Curator at Manly Art Gallery and Museum, who is a pleasure to work with.

Word of mouth is our biggest promoter, and I thank the members who share and inform ceramic enthusiasts about our organisation. In the 12 months up to 30 June 2023, the Association had 1655 members, an increase of 102 memberships from this time last year: 526 Standard, 994 Standard with Insurance, 76 students, and 59 Organisations.

We published three 160-page issues in the 23/24 financial year. Our tactile members embrace the printed Journal. We have also been expanding our stockists to broaden our nationwide reach.

Our team's collaborative spirit was evident in creating the Journal over the last 12 months. In the July 2023 Vol 62/2 and November 2023 Vol 62/3 editions, Bridie Moran and Montessa Maack were Co-Editors, while Montessa also took on the production manager role. Bridie departed her Editorship in December 2023. Bridie has been a valuable asset to The Journal of Australian Ceramics team since 2017 and has contributed to 18 issues: 15 as Assistant Editor and 3 as Co-Editor. Montessa Maack became Editor from the April 2024 issue, Vol 63/1.

Astrid Wehling's design and expertise work alongside the editors to design our Journal with such sophistication. Carol Fraczek is committed to growing the businesses that advertise in our publication. Jen Currie, our proofreader, ensures we publish our Journal without grammatical errors. All play integral roles in bringing our publication to life. And of course the most crucial part of the publication are the many contributors who populate Journal pages with new work, big ideas and deep thinking to expand conversation in our field, strengthen connections in our community, and raise the profile of ceramic work made around the country.

In February 2024 we called out for an Assistant Editor and were delighted to receive 43 high-standard applications. Our Editor, Montessa Maack, saw potential in having four assistant editors working with her on a single Journal edition each. This not only broadens our reach across the country but also gives opportunities to more talent and diverse perspectives across the field. The expansion of technologies and digital transformation, and our team's adaptability, have allowed us to spread further afield with remote work arrangements. Ruby Yeh from Queensland Metro, Alison Smiles from South Australia, Jane Orme from Regional Queensland, and Dee Taylor-Graham from Tasmania are the incoming Assistant Editors and have started the training process with Ruby working on the November issue.

Our digital Journal – an initiative to digitally archive our stories, research, and technical information – is now accessible as a research tool to source information that helps us navigate the complex, tricky medium of ceramics.

We now have three institutions offering specialised institutional digital access to the Journal for students, teachers, and academics through their library systems: TAFE NSW, the Powerhouse Museum, and Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom.

Since we began the new promotion of the digital JAC on our website in March and through communication emails, sales have grown by 44% compared to last year. 63% are Australian sales, and 37% are from overseas.

The 11th annual Australian Ceramics Open Studios was held on Saturday, 11 & Sunday 12 of November, 2023. A total of 210 studios from across the country, representing diverse artistic styles and practices, took part.

Debbie Pryor developed and conducted series 3 of Tools for Practice with the support of the TACA team in July and August 2023. She covered Ceramics and Writing, Working on Country, Clay and mental health therapy, and Knowing your worth and asking for it.

As all our team members work part-time, we've changed our office hours to four days per week, Monday to Thursday. This adjustment allowed for more cross-over and team days, which helped us rebuild our team more effectively. We've also made structural updates to our positions. Georgie Avis's role has expanded to Administrator and Communications. Montessa Maack continues as Project Officer. Jessie Bancroft returned from maternity leave in June 2024, assuming the Administration Assistant role with flexible work arrangements. I want to thank Mirjana Dobson, who filled the Administration Assistant role while Jesse was on maternity leave.

I want to thank our fantastic staff and contractors for their outstanding skills, expertise, and passion. Their work is not just a job but a significant contribution to the field of ceramics. I want to acknowledge the hard work done by TACA's Board of Directors during the last 12 months. As volunteers drawn from our national membership, they have worked diligently to fulfil their responsibilities for TACA's governance, and their impact on the ceramics community is truly commendable. I especially thank President Kate Jones, whose commitment to the organisation has been astounding – she has volunteered her time for the past five years, two of those as President. Our partners, advertisers, and stakeholders work tirelessly to support Australian ceramics in all its forms, and their efforts are making a significant difference. Most importantly, I want to thank our members for your support, which is the driving force behind our collective achievements.

Thank you all, hand it over to Kate.

## **6. Election of Directors**

### **6.1 Transfer of Chair to Secretary Diamando Koutsellis for Election of Directors**

In accordance with the Constitution, one-third of TACA Directors (we currently have six), one-third of those who have been on the board the longest, must stand down.

Kate Jones is standing down after five years on the Board and is not re-nominating, and we thank Kate for her service to the Board. Thanks Kate!

Jackie Gasson is standing down after three years on the Board and is re-nominating

We, therefore, have 4 Directors remaining on the TACA Board for the 2024/2025 year:

Janice Keen (VIC), Hannah Kothe (SA), Alfred Lowe (SA), Robyn Phelan (VIC) Thank you!

There were three nominations for Directors received by the due date 17th September 2024:

Jackie Gasson (QLD): nominated by Kerry Sanders; seconded by Ann Gillespie

Mark Ellis(QLD): nominated by Kerry Sanders; seconded by Jackie Gasson

Brett Stone(NSW): nominated by Vicki Grima; seconded by Kaz Davis

There is no need for a ballot, and we meet the requirement of having 2 to 7 Directors on the Board.

**Motion: That the three nominated Directors, Jackie Gasson, Mark Ellis and Brett Stone, be elected to the TACA Board.**

Proposed: Janice Keen; Seconded Barbara Campbell Allen; all in favour POLL recorded 100% Acceptance  
Poll

Congratulations, Janice, Robyn, Hannah, Alfred and Jackie, on your return to the Board. And welcome Brett and Mark .

Diamando passes the Chair back to Kate.

## **6.2 Appointment of Secretary**

**Motion: that Diamando Koutsellis be appointed Board Secretary.**

Proposed: Sandra Bowett; Seconded: Brett Stone; all in favour POLL 100% acceptance.

## **7. General Business**

Kate gave an informal talk about her experience of governance changes and experimental systems undertaken by the board.

### **7.1 23/24 events**

Our 12<sup>th</sup> national Open Studios weekend will occur on 23 & 24 November, with 194 studios participating.

### **7.3. Membership fees**

Effective from Monday, 1 July 2024, inclusive of GST:

- Standard Membership increased to \$160
- Organisational Membership increased to \$250
- Liability Insurance (an optional add-on to Standard Membership) increased to \$278

This adjustment was necessary due to the rising costs associated with TACA operations and the delivery of our programs and services, and it is critical to our long-term viability.

**Meeting closed at 7:39 pm.**

Diamando Koutsellis  
Secretary  
The Australian Ceramics Association