



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

Wednesday 24 September 2025 7pm via Zoom

Zoom LINK <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/fHLOXRWBSKuVOU0BcuVZyA>

Welcome to the 2025 Annual General Meeting of The Australian Ceramics Association. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians, the Gamay People of the land.

1. Present:

Georgie Avis, Diamando Koutsellis, Brett Stone, Michael Brennan, Robyn Phelan, Alfred Lowe, Amelia Black, J Spak, Jan Alexander, Janice Keen, Judy Greenfield, Katie Cockman, Mark Ellis, Stephanie Henricks, Vicki Grima, Dee Taylor Graham, Montessa Maack, Riti Malik, Szilvia Gyorgy, Zsolt Faludi, Janet De Boos, Katie Cockman, Elaena Gardner, Rita Malik.

Apologies: President Jacqueline Gasson, Toni Warburton, Susan Fraser

There are 23 members present, a quorum is achieved, and the meeting opened at 7.09 pm

2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting 2nd October 2024 (tabled).

The Minutes of the 2024 AGM are available to TACA members online. You can check last year's minutes on our website: <https://australianceramics.com/assets/2024taca-agm-minutes-1.pdf>

Motion: that the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting on 2nd October 2024 be accepted as an accurate record of that meeting, and that they be adopted.

Proposer: Mark Ellis and a seconder: Alfie Lowe; then POLL recorded 100 % acceptance.

Motion is passed.

3. Business arising from the previous AGM 2024 minutes

No business arising

4. Financial Statements (tabled) <https://australianceramics.com/assets/final-annual-report-2025-lores.pdf>

To receive, consider and adopt the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2025.

Tabled: TACA's Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025.

The Financial Statements have been available to TACA members online for the last 2 weeks, as part of the 2025 Annual Report.

Motion: that the financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2024 be accepted.

Proposer: Alfie Lowe and a seconder: Janice Keen; then POLL recorded 100 % acceptance.

Motion is passed.

Please note that the poll had an incorrect note of the previous year. This was explained and no one expressed concerns.

5. Annual Reports (tabled) <https://australianceramics.com/assets/final-annual-report-2025-lores.pdf>

5.1 President: Jacqueline Gasson read by Brett Stone

Last year we said goodbye to Kate Jones who had worked tirelessly for many years as president/board director. Her work ethic and reputation were big shoes to fill, however with the very able assistance of Diamando Koutsellis I have been able to learn a lot. The board and I are very grateful to her for all the enthusiasm and energy she brings to TACA. Her forward thinking is leading us into a very exciting future. Diamando and her staff have formed a wonderful team that are working hard to make TACA sustainable.

Financially we have turned a corner and our new treasurer Mark Ellis has brought a fountain of knowledge as well as some good ideas to make it easy for everybody to understand, thank you Mark.

There will always be challenges with an organisation such as ours, but with the help and support of members from all states and regions we can continue to grow, foster and promote our passion for all things clay.

I would like to thank not only the TACA team but the board members who give their time freely, Robyn Phelan, Alfie Lowe, Janice Keen, Brett Stone and retiring member Hannah Kothe.

The coming year offers much to be excited about, and I look forward to meeting members from all over the country when we come together as a community at many events.

5.2 Treasurer: Mark Ellis

Read by Mark. We recorded a surplus of \$23,054 in the 24-25 financial year, which is a welcome turnaround from the loss of \$24,544 in the prior financial year and slightly ahead of our budgeted surplus. Members' equity increased to \$249,624, which is back to about what it was two years ago in dollar terms (less in real terms due to inflation). That represents roughly 12 months of operating expenses, is in line with the recommendation of our accountant, and provides confidence in the viability of TACA.

Achievement of a surplus follows two years of losses attributable to several factors, chiefly the unanticipated loss of our member policy insurer in 2022. The turnaround in fortunes is attributable to the work done by the last two Treasurers, Mike Hall and Janice Keen, our CEO Diamando Koutsellis, and other members of the Board and the TACA staff during that difficult period. It is also a testament to the continued support of our members.

Trading income has grown steadily over the last three years from \$526k in 22-23 to \$609k in the 24-25, driven chiefly by a recovery in revenue from members with insurance, and from increased subscription revenue from the Journal. As is to be expected the costs associated with providing members insurance and producing the Journal have also increased substantially over that period, by \$47k.

Operating expenses have declined over the last 3 financial years by \$27k, during a period when as we all know costs generally have been increasing at a significant rate. We must credit to our CEO and her team for achieving this outcome. Overall cost management has allowed the Board to agree to maintain membership fees and the Journal subscriptions at the current rates.

TACA's financial position has improved markedly, with a recovery in income, controlled operating expenses, and a return to surplus. The main risks are rising cost of sales (especially insurance) and reliance on a few large income streams. Continued focus on activities that meet the needs of the TACA members, expense management and income diversification will see the organisation remain relevant and viable.

THE JOURNAL

The Journal and associated advertising continue to make a significant and valuable financial and reputational contribution to TACA.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership numbers have declined about 7% over the financial year. The decline of 107 members followed an increase of 102 in the previous year. Anecdotally the reduction is chiefly attributable to the direct and indirect impact of cost of living pressures. The Board are focused on engagement with our membership to understand how TACA can remain relevant to your needs, and also hope that reductions in interest rates, the rate of inflation and improvements in other economic indicators make the coming year easier for our members and potential members, and that this is reflected in membership numbers in coming months.

OUTLOOK

The Board was very focused on managing towards a stable and balanced budget for 2024-25. That has been achieved along with changes to the organisational structure to support that as a sustainable position.

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

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

5.3 Executive Officer:

Diamando Koutsellis read. Since joining as CEO, it has been essential to think about Australian ceramics as a whole and consider what we do, why we do it, and what we aim to achieve. If you want to manifest a vision, it is essential to consider the values that underpin your decisions and how you can bring people on board to share their skills and knowledge in achieving the vision, while all working together to make it happen. As a team, we have chosen three key words to align with our values: elevate, educate, and connect. Everything we do is underpinned by these notions, enabling us to continue steering this organisation and supporting our community.

The organisation is entering a new phase, largely thanks to the team who have taken on new roles and responsibilities. Their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas, combined with the successful restructuring of our positions in response to the digital transformation, have set the stage for this year of transformation.

We have much to be proud of, from developing new partnerships for projects to nurturing our existing alliances, and moving the financials to surplus after two years of deficits. In a cost-of-living crisis and inflation boom, reduced incomes and increased expenses have significantly impacted our organisation.

The cost-of-living crisis has had a significant impact on the entire arts and crafts industry. The incomes of artists, potters, and all those involved in the arts are under substantial financial pressure. Artists and craftspeople typically have precarious incomes, relying on sales, exhibitions, and teaching streams. With the increase in costs, the lowest-paid industries are finding it challenging to continue the important work that enhances cultural life. Nevertheless, we continue to move forward, adapt and recreate, and this wave of challenges will pass.

I see the role of the organisation as assisting in alleviating these challenges, working to create more opportunities to exhibit, educate ourselves, develop small businesses and connect with other makers and the broader community. TACA aims to continue serving our community of creators and the broader ceramics community, to create opportunities that enhance Australian ceramics and everyone connected to our industry.

Our Association's success is in large part attributed to the invaluable support of our members. At TACA, we are committed to supporting our membership. In the 12 months leading up to 30 June 2025, we were proud to have 1,548 members. While this number – 1,548 – reflects a decrease of 107 memberships from the previous year, it's essential to note that each member plays a crucial role in the sustainability of our organisation. The combined impact of rising insurance costs and cost-of-living pressures has significantly affected our standard with insurance membership offering, resulting in a decrease of 94 standard with insurance memberships since the same time last year.

Our dedication to supporting First Nations practice remains unwavering, and we are proud to continue offering five free memberships to First Nations groups that have a ceramics studio. We also extend our support to universities, TAFEs, and many national community groups through free memberships and journal subscriptions, as well as prizes and awards.

On 31 July 2024, our members came together to vote on changes to our constitution to enable us to apply for Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Status.

On 5 August 2024, we achieved a significant milestone by becoming a Tax Deductible Gift Recipient, enabling donations, and we are now registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

Members can donate \$10, \$20, or \$50 on their renewal invoices and membership application forms as an optional add-on. We also have a dedicated website page for donations. The donations from the 24/25 year culminated in 146 donations totalling \$1,923 including a large donation of \$500 from a non member. I sincerely thank all who donated, and those who voted on the constitution changes, enabling us to look into the future with new possibilities.

We published three 160-page issues in the 24/25 financial year. The Journal of Australian Ceramics has achieved significant milestones this year, reaching into every corner of the country. This success is a testament to the dedication of our editor, Montessa Maack. Montessa has steered the vision of the Journal with a genuine community-focused approach. Her perseverance, grit, pursuit of articles, and receptiveness to ideas are reflected in the quality of our publication.

Montessa's initiative this year to involve a diverse group of Assistant Editors from different parts of Australia has enriched the Journal pages and the entire process. We are fortunate to have Ruby Yu-Lu Yeh from Queensland and Alison Smiles from South Australia working on this year's publications. Their innovative ideas and hard work have significantly contributed to our Journal, with the benefits of broadening our reach and range of perspectives and experiences.

The Editorial Advisory Group meets four times per year. At each meeting Montessa, along with the four Assistant Editors, myself, a TACA Board Director, and volunteers from our industry, join in a conversation to discuss current issues in our field, explore article ideas and identify potential

contributors. Every twelve months the Editorial Advisory Group rotates to allow new people to share their insights.

The writers and contributors of the Journal come from across the country with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and have explored ideas, thoughts, and practices that both inform and enrich our community.

Astrid Wehling's expertise, working alongside the editors, designs our Journal with such sophistication. Carol Fraczek is committed to growing our connections to the businesses that advertise in and support our publication. Jen Currie, our proofreader, ensures we publish our Journal without grammatical errors. Newstyle prints the Journal with incredible quality, and Jason Murray supports us with mailing it.

The digital Journal is seeing an increase in both Australian and overseas subscribers, with a growing number opting for annual and quarterly subscriptions. In 2024/2025, we recorded 42 annual sales and 156 quarterly sales to the general public. 63% of sales are from Australia, and 37% are from overseas.

Following the success of our 2024 exhibition HELD at Manly Art Gallery and Museum, which featured small-scale works from a large number of our members, we have now embarked on a new iteration of this idea. Noosa Regional Gallery has come on board to host our next small-works members' exhibition, and the exhibition is titled Continuum. Preparations are underway for Continuum which will open in July 2026.

We are also working with our longstanding partners, Manly Museum and Art Gallery, towards our 2027 exhibitions. A call-out for a curator for this major exhibition is underway, and a small-scale exhibition will accompany. These exhibition opportunities, showcasing our membership, provide an opportunity to display the work of artists and potters in public galleries, supporting practice, and elevating ceramics by educating the public.

The 12th annual Australian Ceramics Open Studios was held on Saturday 8 & Sunday 9 November 2024. A total of 189 studios from across the country, each with a unique artistic style and practice, took part. This year, we allowed members to choose between Saturday, Sunday or both days, and

40 participants decided to open for one day only. We transformed ACOS this year with a new registration and directory hosted on *membes*, and broad promotions, including our first appearance on TV news on Channel 9 NBN Coffs Harbour.

Our team's successful transition from manual processes to the digital transformation has been a significant achievement for TACA. This transformation has brought us up to speed with the latest technologies, administration, and communication systems. Notably, membership invoicing and portal access are now fully operational, along with streamlined event registrations and communication processes. As we move forward, we plan to populate the portal with more information, further enhancing the membership experience.

My sincere thanks to all our members, staff, contractors, Board of Directors, Journal contributors, advertisers, and stockists, who have supported TACA over the past 12 months to ensure the viability, sustainability, and future of our organisation. Together, we celebrate and share the expression of Australian ceramics.

Thank you all.

6. Election of Directors

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

Diamando:

In accordance with the Constitution, 1/3 of TACA Directors (we currently have 7), have to stand down every year.

Hannah Kothe is standing down after 2 years on the Board. Hannah has brought new perspectives and energy to Board discussions and we thank her for her commitment to TACA's progress. Thank you!

Janice Keen will stand down and is re-nominating.

Alfred Lowe will stand down and is re-nominating.

We therefore have 4 Directors remaining on the TACA Board for the 2025/2026 year:

Jacqueline Gasson (QLD), Mark Ellis (QLD), Brett Stone (NSW), Robyn Phelan (VIC) Thank you!

There were 3 nominations for Directors received by the due date 9th September 2025:

Janice Keen (VIC): nominated by Joanne Davies; seconded by Marlize Myburgh

Alfred Lowe (SA): nominated by Alison Smiles; seconded by Brett Stone

Amelia Black (VIC): nominated by Robyn Phelan; seconded by Vicki Grima

There is no need for a ballot, and we meet the requirements to have from 3 to 7 Directors.

Motion: that the 3 nominated Directors Janice Keen, Alfred Lowe and Amelia Black are elected to the TACA Board.

Proposer: Brett Stone and a seconder: Vicki Grima; POLL is 100% ACCEPTED

Congratulations Janice, Alfred on your return to the Board. And welcome Amelia Black.

6.2 Appointment of Secretary

Motion: that CEO Diamando Koutsellis be appointed as Secretary.

Proposed: Vicki Grima; seconded: Janice Keen; POLL is 100% ACCEPTED

Congratulations Diamando.

7. General Business

No other business

7.1 2025/2026 Events

Wedge - The Australian Ceramics Triennale 2025, 2 - 5 October 2025, Walyalup/Fremantle Western Australia.

Australian Ceramics Open Studios, 8 & 9 November 2025.

Continuum in Partnership with Noosa Regional Gallery QLD, 18 July - 13 September 2026.

Meeting closed: 7.39PM

Minutes taken by Robyn Phelan

Welcome back, everyone.

EVENING CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL BRENNAN

A feature of the AGM evening is a conversation with guests: Michael Brennan Director and Curator from Noosa Regional Gallery and Brett Stone TACA Board Director.