

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUANTS INC.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

1:00 pm Monday 29 November 2021

1. Welcome

President James Vandenberg acknowledged the traditional ownership of the Kurna people and paid his respect to their elders.

James welcomed 36 members to the meeting, and welcomed guest speaker Mark Parnell.

2. Apologies

Secretary Brenton Pain noted that apologies had been received from Peter Fleming, Keren Wicks, Claire Withers, Barry Apsy, Charles Tucker, Rod Hern and Tim Mausolf.

3. Reports

James reported that

- The Melbourne sub-Committee had been established, with John Barrett as convenor. The other members were Don Campbell, Barry Shafer and Peter Cockrum. The sub-Committee would be provided with reasonable financial support to facilitate member activities in Victoria. There are currently 87 members in Victoria.
- Work was underway to respond to SA Treasurer Lucas' letter declining to support continuation of the full pension for a period following the death of a Pension Scheme member, for additional support to the bereaved partner before the 2/3 spouse pension begins.
- Ray Hickman had received medical treatment in hospital just recently. James was sure he spoke for all members in wishing Ray an early recovery and noted that Ray had got the Superannuation Advisory Group off to a good start as its convenor.
- Max Jahn had recently reported current membership of 1,750. Max noted that this figure would change with annual membership renewals coming up.
- Donations to the fighting fund were still open and very welcome. Michael Evans advised that the bank balance stood at approximately \$15,000, a quite healthy figure.
- Ian Beckingham has assembled a very interesting list of future speakers, with next year's program looking very good.
- Peter Frick continued to do an excellent job as Website Manager and Newsletter Co-ordinator. James noted with sadness the recent passing of Peter's son and was sure he spoke for all members in expressing his condolences and best wishes to Peter and his family.
- About 20 people participated in the members lunch on 17 November, fewer than expected, but it was a great day with good company and nice food.

- Nominations for the Committee in 2022 were now open with the AGM coming up in February, and Secretary Brenton Pain would be standing down. James encouraged members to nominate for the Committee, not necessarily as Secretary, pointing out that if the numbers are not on the Committee the Association will fall short of what it wants to achieve.

4. Guest Speaker: Mark Parnell

Brenton introduced former Member of the Legislative Council Mark Parnell with some brief biographical information.

Mark addressed the meeting on the topic "A View from the Cross-bench", discussing how things really work in Parliament, and how people in the community sector can effectively engage with Members of Parliament. Mark commented that Ray Hickman was a "frequent flyer" in engaging with MPs and said that he was sorry to hear that Ray had been unwell.

Mark Parnell explained that everyone comes to Parliament with some baggage, and outlined some aspects of his experience over 15 years with the Environmental Defenders Office, working as a pro-bono solicitor for conservation groups. A big win in a long court case had been negated one week later when the government simply changed the law, and excluded any appeals mechanism. That had been a watershed moment, prompting the decision to look for a seat in Parliament.

Since retiring from Parliament Mark has been looking after family matters, re-acquainting himself with observing and photographing wildlife, and working on civics education: how the relationship between the legislature, executive, judiciary and public service really works, and how the community can achieve what it wants to achieve.

Mark explained that South Australians should be grateful for an active crossbench, less interested in point-scoring and "gotchas", noting that neither Liberal nor Labor had controlled the upper house since the 1970s.

Mark discussed the planning and development system in South Australia. On his election he was the only qualified planner in Parliament. He illustrated with examples the trend over the past 20 years for South Australians' rights to engage in the planning process to be eroded. One example was the government's outsourcing of planning for Mt Barker's development to the same consultants working for the developer. Mark explained that SA land use planning had in many ways become a box-ticking exercise, and the pervasive attitude in the planning department that the community was there to be tolerated.

Mark Parnell offered some direct advice on lobbying.

- The starting point is to clearly know what you want.
- It is important to recognize that just presenting a good argument is not enough.
- Give real examples that evoke a human response, such as the image of the squashed bird when campaigning for 4wd vehicles to be excluded from beaches when seabirds are nesting season.

- Understand the decision-making process - Parliament? Minister? Delegated to whom? What are the criteria?
- What if you don't like the decision? Ring up, make contact, don't wait for an election.
- Recognize that the MP will be asking him or herself
 - who is this from?
 - what do I know about them?
 - why should I care?
 - what do they want exactly?
- Keep in mind that some MPs are smarter than you, that some are dumber, and that most of them genuinely think that they are on the right track. Approach them as though they are sincere.
- If you get a hearing and an outcome, thank them.

Mark noted Dr Barbara Hardy AO as an example of a most effective campaigner and influencer.

Mark Parnell's thought-provoking address concluded with questions, answers and discussion of topics including recent reforms to the SA Independent Commission against Corruption; whether public protests have any influence; Birds SA's documentary on birds and beaches; online versus pen and ink petitions to Parliament (remember to gather signatories email addresses); when to engage with the local member and when to go to the Minister; online fundraising for campaigns; possibilities for more citizen initiated decision making; climate change and population growth.

On behalf of members Brenton thanked Mark for his very interesting and useful talk, and presented him with a bottle of wine to mark the Association's appreciation.

Father Christmas, courtesy of Barry Goodwin, made a brief appearance as the last meeting for 2021 concluded.

Meeting Closed

The meeting closed at 2:30 pm approximately.
