



**Australian Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique  
(AUSTAT) Inc**

**Minutes of the Thirty-Seventh Annual General Meeting**

---

The meeting commenced at 11am Australian Eastern Daylight-Saving Time (AEDT)  
on

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

By Zoom Conference and meeting venues

**1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He acknowledged the country on which we are meeting and the Elders of that land.

The Chair read through the Zoom guidelines, standing orders, AGM Agreement and AGM procedures.

**2 Present, Apologies and Proxies**

**The following members were in attendance:**

In Victoria

Alexandra Lepikhin  
Aniko Ball  
Bronwyn Munro  
Caroline Blackshaw  
Cathy Dowden  
David Moore  
Helene Goldberg  
Jane Azul  
Jenny Thirtle  
Jeremy Woolhouse  
Ray Taylor  
Ruth Clarnette  
Sharon Van Doorn  
Tony Smith

In New South Wales

Grant Morrison  
Helen Thomson  
Jane Shellshear  
Marietta Simarro-Garcia  
Mark Bennie  
Michael Shellshear  
Penelope Carr  
Shelley Kaye Ashton  
Simon Fitzgibbon

In Tasmania

Penny McDonald

In South Australia

Chris Raff

In Queensland

Michael Gleeson

In Western Australia

Sandra Dobbs  
Elena Cabrera  
Mark Baker

In Taiwan

Opal Huang  
Richard Peng

Minute Taker: Karen Nankervis, My Beechworth Secretary

---

**Present by Proxy:**

Kate Martin	assigned to :	Aniko Ball
Ben O'Loughlin	assigned to :	Aniko Ball
Matthew Wasley	assigned to :	Aniko Ball
Margaret McGill	assigned to :	Aniko Ball
Teresa Mears	assigned to :	Caroline Blackshaw
Chris Falk	assigned to :	Cathy Dowden
Karen Anderson	assigned to :	Cathy Dowden
Karyn Chapman	assigned to :	Helen Thomson
Mary Cerny Carrigan	assigned to :	Helen Thomson
Terry Fitzgerald	assigned to :	Helen Thomson
Sheila Hale	assigned to :	Helene Goldberg
Emma Hyland	assigned to :	Jenny Thirtle
Carina Thomas	assigned to :	Jenny Thirtle
Jack Mintz	assigned to :	Jenny Thirtle
Meredith Connie	assigned to :	Marietta Simarro-Garcia
Diana Devitt Dawson	assigned to :	Mark Bennie
Greg Ford	assigned to :	Penelope Carr
Jane Refshauge	assigned to :	Penelope Carr
Léonie John	assigned to :	Penelope Carr
Michael Stenning	assigned to :	Penelope Carr
Elke Rudolph	assigned to :	Penny McDonald
Jane Coker	assigned to :	Penny McDonald
Janette Costin	assigned to :	Penny McDonald
Michael Clarke Lewis	assigned to :	Simon Fitzgibbon
Bradley Newman	assigned to :	Simon Fitzgibbon
Michael McGurgan	assigned to :	Tony Smith (Chair)
Jeanette Hajncl	assigned to :	Tony Smith (Chair)
Philip Shaw	assigned to :	Tony Smith (Chair)

**Voting strength, including proxies - 58****Apologies:**

Ann Carroll	Jane Coker	Matthew Wasley
Ben O'Loughlin	Jane Refshauge	Meredith Connie
Bradley Newman	Janette Costin	Michael Clarke Lewis
Carina Thomas	Jeanette Hajncl	Michael McGurgan
Chris Falk	Karen Anderson	Michael Stenning
Diana Devitt Dawson	Karyn Chapman	Philip Shaw
Elke Rudolph	Kate Martin	Sheila Hale
Emma Hyland	Léonie John	Teresa Mears
Greg Ford	Margaret McGill	Terry Fitzgerald
Jack Mintz	Mary Cerny Carrigan	

### **3 Adoption of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 2019**

The Chair invited members to advise if any amendments were required to the 2019 AGM minutes.

**Motion:** That AUSTAT adopt the minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

**Moved:** Penny McDonald      **Seconded:** Caroline Blackshaw

**Voting:** 58 in favour

**Voting result:** The motion was carried.

### **4 Matters arising from the minutes of the 2019 AGM**

Nil

### **5 Adoption of Minutes of the Special General Meeting, 2020**

The Chair invited members to advise if any amendments were required to the 2020 Special General Meeting minutes.

**Motion:** That AUSTAT adopt the minutes of the 2020 Special General Meeting.

**Moved:** Alexandra Lepikhin      **Seconded:** Cathy Dowden

**Voting:** 58 in favour,

**Voting result:** The motion was carried.

### **6 Matters arising from the minutes of the 2020 SGM**

Nil

***11.30am Elena Cabrera joined the meeting***

***Voting strength including proxies - 59***

## 7 Adoption of Accounts and Reports

### Chair's Report:

The Interim Chair, Tony Smith, read the Chair's report presented by Jeremy Woolhouse prior to his resignation in August and his Addendum report.

Amendment: Paragraph 2, "not the only Australian school now training students who will graduate but not be automatically eligible for AUSTAT membership" Rule (c), they can't automatically be members, but there is a procedure they can go through to become AUSTAT members. Remove the word 'Automatically'

**Motion: That the Chair's and Interim Chair's reports be accepted with that amendment**

**Moved: Tony Smith      Seconded: Sandra Dobbs**

Voting: 59 yes

**Voting Result: The motion was carried**

### Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Penny McDonald, report taken as read.

As per amendment in Chair's report 'Only two of the four operating training schools in Australia are training students to automatically be AUSTAT members.' Remove the word 'automatically'

**Motion: That the Treasurer's report be accepted as read with amendment.**

**Moved: Tony Smith      Seconded: Aniko Ball**

Voting: 59 yes

**Voting Result: The motion was carried**

### Discussion:

Question asked about granting waivers: Treasurer will report on that at next AGM. in the current financial year there are around 10.

Declining numbers explained: The Treasurer explained that the comment about declining numbers was around the lack of students coming in, at that time there was only 4 students in Australia.

Chair thanks everyone who had supplied reports for the Annual Report.

## 8 Election of Office Bearers for 2020/2021

One nomination for the position of Chair has been received. Tony Smith stepped aside as Chair for this vote, and Ray Taylor took over the voting process. Penny McDonald and Aniko Ball spoke about their reasons for nominating Tony Smith. Tony spoke about the opportunities going forward to progress the training and teaching of AT and to come together as a society.

Position	Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
Chair	Tony Smith	Penny McDonald	Aniko Ball

Voting: 56 yes (Votes not received from 1 person and 2 proxies)

**Tony Smith was duly elected to the position of Chair**

One nomination for the position of Treasurer has been received.

One nomination for the position of Treasurer has been received. Jeremy Woolhouse and Tony Smith spoke about their reasons for nominating Penny McDonald. Penny responded that she has learnt lots in the last 2 years and is keen to share the workload with everyone at Council over the next 2 years.

Position	Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
Treasurer	Penny McDonald	Jeremy Woolhouse	Tony Smith

Voting: 55 yes, 4 no,

**Penny McDonald was duly elected to the position of Treasurer**

### Election of up to 4 Ordinary Council Members:

The Chair thanked Ray Taylor and Mark Baker, who are stepping down from Council, this year for all their efforts over the last 2 years.

The following nominations have been received for 4 Ordinary Council Members

Nominees, and those who nominated them, spoke about the nominations.

Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
Caroline Blackshaw	Penny McDonald	Aniko Ball
Michael Clark-Lewis	Simon Fitzgibbon	Maria Simarro
Alexandra Lepikhin	Aniko Ball	Penny McDonald
Carina Thomas	Penny McDonald	Aniko Ball
Helen Thomson	Aniko Ball	Penny McDonald

There were no questions for the nominees.

Voting: 221 yes (over 5 nominees), 15 abstentions.

**Caroline Blackshaw, Alexandra Lepikhin, Carina Thomas and Helen Thomson were duly elected to the position of Ordinary Council Members.**

Michael Shellshear asked for a vote of thanks to everyone stepping down from council, all those that nominated and those on council going into the new year. Applause from those present.

9 **Review and set the AUSTAT Entrance and Annual Membership Fees.**

Fees have been raised by \$5 each year. At a council meeting recently it was suggested that fees don't go up this year due to COVID.

**Motion: That fees remain the same for 2021 as they were in 2020**

**Moved: Penny McDonald      Seconded: Aniko Ball**

Voting: 55 yes, 0 no, 4 abstain

**Voting Result: The motion was carried**

10 **Motions on notice**

Jeremy Woolhouse advised that because of the wording of Motion 1, this motion should be placed as Motion 3. The motion says it includes motions up to this point. The Chair ruled that Motion 1 will become Motion 3 and discussed at the end of this meeting.

**Motion Two (dealt with first)**

This resolution is intended to be passed as a **"special resolution"**

That the second sentence of 35 (a) (i) of the Rules of Austat be changed

From:

"Each working week to consist of between 12-20 hours and at least four days"

To:

"Each working week to consist of between 12-20 hours and at least three days."

Moved by: David Moore

Seconded by: Jenny Thirtle

**Discussion**

As proposer, David Moore spoke for his motion. Currently Heads of Training can ask council for a variation to training, and generally this is accepted. In addition, there is a training school in France that is doing 3 days per week and the STAT constitution has been changed to include more flexibility. Putting this motion forward as small change that he hopes most people will accept.

Simon Fitzgibbon spoke against the motion: He appreciated Jenny Thirtle and David Moore's attempt at this motion and is Ok with 3 days but doesn't like not having any limit on hours per day, therefore the motion allows for 8-hour days.

Aniko Ball clarified David's proposal. She was the first person AUSTAT gave permission to do 3 days a week over 4 years, she couldn't have studied if that wasn't available and believes this is the way forward as it will open training to many professionals.

Marietta Simarro Garcia gave the French school example, 4 hours a day, 3 days, but felt that someone doing 8 hours a day wasn't satisfactory.

Ray Taylor supported this small change, and while he is not involved with training, he gets frustrated by Training Course directors not coming to a consensus. The most

important is 3 years, 1600 hours, 80% - then up to training directors to run their courses as best suits their students.

Jenny Thirtle confirmed that the change is small and that instead of having to go to Council for this 3-day variation, this allows this form of training to happen ongoing.

Voting: 51 yes, 7 no, 1 abstention

**Voting Result: The motion was carried**

#### Motion Three (dealt with second)

This resolution is intended to be passed as a “**special resolution**”

That following 7 (d) “A Student Member shall”, Section 7 (d) (i) be amended to read: “be entitled to attend and speak to items of business but not vote at any General Meeting of AUSTAT;”

Moved by: Michael Clark-Lewis

Seconded by: Simon Fitzgibbon

#### Discussion

As proposer, Michael Clark-Lewis advised this is a simple motion, due to lack of clarity at previous AGMs over whether students can speak or not at an AGM. This motion brings clarity and shows students that their voice is welcome at meetings, seeks to engage them and encourage enthusiasm.

Ray Taylor spoke that he was happy to have students speak at meetings, but felt it should not be include in rules as we don't have this permission for teacher members and this then give students extra privilege.

David Moore felt that putting it in the rules, makes it clear and takes decision away Chair.

Michael Shellshear has had to make an on the spot decision about this previously, and there wasn't any guidance. This amendment makes the role of the Chair much easier and leads to clear decision making.

Simon Fitzgibbon, addressing Ray's point, said that teachers aren't given specific permission to speak, and neither do students at present, it is a decision by the chair. This gives clarity to that permission for students.

Voting: 46 yes, 12 no, 1 abstention

**Voting Result: The motion was carried**

#### Motion 1 (dealt with last)

This resolution is intended to be passed as a “**special resolution**”

That AUSTAT adopts as its constitution the document entitled “Constitution of the Australian Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (AUSTAT) Incorporated November 2012”, inclusive of all amendments made to this document in General Meetings subsequent to November 2012, and including all amendments made hitherto in this General Meeting, and that the new constitution be called “The Constitution of the Australian Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (AUSTAT) Incorporated November 2020”.

Moved on behalf of AUSTAT Council by: Aniko Ball, Council Member

Seconded by: Sharon van Doorn, Secretary

Ray Taylor (with approval from the Chair) explained the reasoning behind this motion. The 2 motions passed today are not official until lodged with NSW Fair Trading. When this was done after the SGM they pointed out that this had not been done for a resolution passed in 2012. They suggested that when we next passing resolutions, we pass the full constitution, including all resolutions pass to this point.

Marietta Simarro Garcia asked if all the minutes been checked to ensure that no other special resolutions have been missed. Ray Taylor assured the meeting that this has been done.

Helen Thomson checked that the public officer would be advised of the responsibility to submit the paperwork, the Chair advised that this would be done and that Council has responsibility to ensure that this obligation is done.

Voting: 59 yes, 0 no, 0 abstention

**Voting Result: The motion was carried** unanimously

## 11 General Business

Mick Gleeson gave an update on the Natural Therapies Review which he is on the panel for. Alexander Technique isn't being looked at until the second tranche. Based on how they are looking at other modalities, he felt we will probably get treated the same. The Terms of Reference want robust evidence from lots systematic reviews, and AT is unlikely to be approved as based on how they view things, we don't have the body of evidence required. They felt there was no long-term evidence on the back pain study, however Mick has managed to get this included again.

Thankyou to Mick for all the work and dedication he has put in, we are indebted to him for the work. Aniko stated that if we don't get accepted its not because AT isn't effective, its just that we don't have all the research and masses of \$\$.

There is limited research funding, and the mainstream forget to factor in is that they have the 'machine at their disposal', they have funding, and army of PHD students. We are trying to squeeze into a box that we don't fit into. They are trying to understand how AT works. They are also not looking at more global health, they are looking at very specific boxes eg back pain, diabetes, and if you can't show how to fix these, they don't accept. Also the back pain study had a variety of number of lessons and from a scientific view its difficult to work out the specifics. To be accepted in these situations, we need to work out dosage, mechanism and what it does and doesn't help. We don't have the research funding to do this.

Penny McDonald advised that one of her students is a GP and there is a push to get people off opiates. Is there a way for us to promote AT? Opiates addiction is massive problem globally, and an AT study in UK showed there was a drop in medication but the study was not done in big numbers so not accepted. His study was with 120 people, but would need 500+ people and probably cost about \$1m so would need the support of existing researchers with clout to secure funding.

What would be involved to getting research in Australia?

Money. For a study to be recognised as legitimate, really needs to be part of 'the establishment', needs some big wheel professor with connections and existing research group. We aren't in the race. Good things happening in UK where they have more money and influence.

No further general business.

## 12 Date for next AGM

The meeting agreed that the date of the next AGM would be 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The Chair thanked everyone for their support and input into the meeting. He looks forward to a productive year.

Meeting Closed: 2.40pm

Signature of Chair

Date

DRAFT