

REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICE INC

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 26 NOVEMBER 2024

Level 2, 43 Peel Street, South Brisbane and via Zoom

WELCOME AND OPENING

1. The meeting was opened at 5.18pm by RAILS President, Abdul Jarrah.
2. Uncle Billy Cummings, Aboriginal Elder, gave a welcome to country on behalf of the Turrbal People.
3. The Executive Director, Angus Francis, introduced the guest speaker, Mary Anne Kenny, Associate Professor in the School of Law and Criminology at Murdoch University. Assoc. Professor Kenny spoke about her work in the area of human rights, refugee and immigration law, and working with lawyers, migration agents, and clients. Assoc. Professor Kenny commented on her research findings about the experiences of immigrating and asylum-seeking clients navigating the existing legal system, and the impacts on those clients, noting significant mental health and ethical dilemmas. Assoc. Professor Kenny reported that all practitioners were exposed to psychological distress of the clients and were akin to first responders, but that community legal centres are better trained to respond to the needs of those clients, compared with private practitioners and volunteers.

ATTENDANCE

4. The following persons were in attendance:

Name	Role	In person or Zoom
Abdul Jarrah	President/Member	In person
Kathryn McKeon	Committee Member	In person
Narelle Sutherland	Committee Member	Zoom
Hiwa Zandi	Committee Member	In person
Kelly Morrow	Committee Member	In person
Gayan Mendis	Committee Member	Zoom
Matt Black	Committee Member	<i>Proxy</i>
Elijah Buol	Financial Member	In person
Alexis Wallace	Financial Member	Zoom
Robert Lachowicz	Financial Member	Zoom
Angus Francis	ED/PS	In person

Kylie McGrath	Staff	In person
Cristina Prieto Salvador	Staff	In person
Uncle Billy Cummings	Guest	In person
Associate Prof. Mary Anne Kenny	Guest	Zoom
Emma Fell	Staff	In person
Camilo Galeano	Staff	In person
Neha Vaidyanathan	Staff	In person
Lavanniya Ganeshanathan	Staff	In person
Simone Cameron	Staff	In person
Rose Ukin	Staff	In person
Michelle Hua	Staff	In person
Jessica Truong	Staff	In person
Stephanie Towns	Staff	In person
Kell Andersen	Staff	In person
Kano Nawagawa	Staff	In person
Fay Brewer	Staff	In person
Bill Kyle	Staff	In person
Grace O'Shannessy	Staff	In person
Nitra Kidson	Financial Member	<i>Proxy</i>
Edward Hooper, Minter Ellison	Stakeholder	In person
Geraldine Gerrard, SSI	Stakeholder	Zoom
Liz Gordon, QPASTT	Stakeholder	Zoom
Keirman FitzPatrick, Multicultural Australia	Stakeholder	In person

5. Proxies:

- (a) Nitra Kidson (member) to Kelly Morrow
- (b) Matt Black (member) to Kelly Morrow

6. Apologies received from:

- (a) Nitra Kidson
- (b) Matt Black
- (c) Susan Hogarth
- (d) Emily Humphreys
- (e) Robert Reed

BUSINESS

Previous AGM held 21 November 2024

7. The minutes of the previous AGM were read and accepted as a true and correct record:
 - (a) Moved: Kate McKeon
 - (b) Seconded: Kelly Morrow
8. Business arising from minutes: None

Annual Report presented by President Abdul Jarrah and outgoing President Kylie McGrath

9. Abdul and Kylie spoke to the 2023-2024 Annual Report.
10. President Jarrah reported another year of significant change for RAILS. An organisational restructure was implemented this financial year, expanding RAILS services to better enable staff to assist clients and stakeholders, further supported by an additional influx of funding. President Jarrah noted his confidence in the management committee and staff leadership being well positioned to continue to meet the demands of the organisation, providing good services and making a difference in the lives of clients.
11. Kylie McGrath spoke to the difference RAILS' makes in the lives of clients, including orphaned children, family violence victims and new arrivals who navigate the complex Australian legal system. Kylie reflected on notable events, including:
 - (a) the doubling of applicants of plane arriving asylum seekers substantially raising the demand on RAILS and pro bono partners;
 - (b) assisting boat arriving refugees to receive permanent residence after many years waiting with uncertainty; and
 - (c) improving the services for family violence applicants.
12. Kylie thanked staff and external supporters of RAILS for all of their efforts in the past year. She acknowledged and thanked the many individuals who had donated to RAILS, and the law firms who had partnered with RAILS in pro bono work and providing staff on secondment.
13. Kylie and Abdul welcomed the incoming principal solicitor and executive director, Angus Francis.
 - (a) Moved: Elijah Buol
 - (b) Seconded: Kate McKeon

Report from the Treasurer

14. Kate McKeon presented the financial statements for 2023-2024.
15. Kate reported:
 - (a) RAILS recorded an operating surplus of \$139,762. The surplus was largely possible due to unexpected grant income received late in the year to support people applying for permanent refugee status onshore.
 - (b) Kate acknowledged government funders and donors. Total revenue of \$3,148,625 grew 4% compared to last year's record high, inclusive of \$123,807 in donations. Grants from federal and state governments continued to represent the largest source of revenue.
 - (c) Total annual expenses were \$3,008,863, with the main expenditure categories being employee entitlements and other operating costs. RAILS' move to new premises and various associated expenses contributing to higher "Other Operating Costs" than the previous year.
 - (d) RAILS received a clean and clear audit from Haywards, our auditors.
 - (e) The financial position for the coming year is already predicted to be strong due to the continuance of funding to address on-shore protection visa backlogs and additional NLAP funding to improve staff conditions.
16. Kate thanked the Finance Sub-Committee (Gayan Mendis, Kelly Morrow, Cristina Prieto Salvador, Kylie McGrath, Mei Wang and Bill Kyle) and recognised the contribution of departing Management Committee member, Peter See.
 - (a) Moved: Abdul Jarrah
 - (b) Seconded: Kelly Morrow

Declaration of remuneration and benefits

17. The document satisfies RAILS' obligations to disclose the aggregate amount of remuneration paid and benefits given to senior staff and Management Committee members and their relatives pursuant to s 9E of the *Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999* (QLD) and s 70D of the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981* (QLD).

18. Angus Francis noted that the aggregated amount of remuneration paid and benefits given was \$699,660. The figure represents pay for senior employed staff only and that no Management Committee member receives remuneration or benefits.
19. Copies of the Declaration of Remuneration and Benefits document were available at the meeting for inspection by members.

Election of Management Committee Members 2024-2025

20. Acting returning officer Angus Francis invited the members of the 2023-2024 management committee to stand down. Quorum was met. Two proxies acknowledged. The following persons were then elected unanimously to the management committee for 2024-2025:

Name	Position nominated for
Abdul Jarrah	President
Kathryn McKeon	Treasurer
Kelly Morrow	Secretary
Matt Black	Member
Hiwa Zandi	Member
Gayana Mandis	Member
Elijah Buol	Member
Alexis Wallace	Member

Vote of Thanks to outgoing committee and welcome to new

21. Kylie McGrath, outgoing President and Executive Director/Principal Solicitor, gave a vote of thanks to outgoing Management Committee members, Lorraine Hill and Narelle Sutherland, and welcomed new committee members, Elijah Buol and Alexis Wallace.
22. A special acknowledgement and thanks was given to President Abdul Jarrah for direction regarding the new premises change, to the members and staff who implemented the new staff restructure, to Kate McKeon for financial analysis and to Angus Francis as the incoming ED/PS.

Appointment of Auditor

23. A motion by Kate McKeon was passed without dissent that Haywoods be appointed as auditor for the 2024/2025 financial year.

(a) Moved: Kate McKeon

(b) Seconded: Hiwa Zandi

GENERAL BUSINESS

24. Gifts to the management committee.

25. Elijah Buol queried whether RAILS would respond to the Amendment Bill currently before parliament. Angus Francis noted RAILS was in discussions with other CLCs nationwide in respect of the proposed legislation, with Victorian community legal centres leading the advocacy with RAILS contribution.

26. No other business.

27. Abdul Jarrah provided a final thank you and recognition to RAILS staff.

Meeting declared closed at 6.18pm.



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Kelly Morrow, Secretary and Member