

ABNMS 2009 Meeting Minutes

University of Melbourne

Chair: Kevin Korb
Secretary: Steven Mascaro

26 Nov, 2009

1 Attendance & apologies

Kevin Korb: There will be no attendance and apologies today, because this is the first meeting of the Society. [There were 46 members attending.] The main purpose will be to adopt a constitution and elect a Board. Also note that agenda item 4 needs to be moved to after item 5.

I will now read the goals proposed for the Society out loud (from Point 2 in the constitution): the goals of the society are to promote BNs, to further education, to further research, to provide advice, socialise, opportunities for jobs and ensure the ethical use of models. The goals can be changed if needed, but I hope they are acceptable.

2 Overview & background

Ann Nicholson: Two years ago there was a very successful meeting in Brisbane, hosted by Carl Smith and Carmel Pollino. This led to the idea of a formal society, being more structured and supported financially. To date, we have a draft constitution and website. The website is pretty plain, but it can be extended by putting links to people, etc. There's a large number of people in the modelling community, in academia, but now BN use is moving into the business and government community.

3 Treasurer's report

Ann Nicholson: There are 35 members online. Some have registered for the conference that aren't members and vice versa. It looks like there's a community of 50 people overall. There are no membership fees so far.

Kevin Korb: According to the constitution, there are no fees till 1st July, 2010.

Ann Nicholson: We managed to run this conference without registration fees because of sponsorship. We now have a bank account, have organised netbanking, and have given out invoices to all our sponsors. We have \$3500 promised in sponsorships, which covers printing costs, bits and pieces and dinner. We should still have a couple of hundred dollars left for the future. Bayesian Intelligence has paid for the web domain and host to start off with. Kevin Korb and myself are signatories of the account. To keep going, we will need to have money coming in. We have no balance sheet as yet.

Member: Are there societies like this overseas?

Ann Nicholson: To my knowledge, no. We might affiliate ourselves with the Mark Burgman's Society for Risk Analysis.

Kevin Korb: We should ask around and see if there are any. Maybe others will notice and start one overseas.

4 Constitution

Kevin Korb: There are two categories of membership: full and student. Student members don't have voting privileges — but for now, if you're here you can vote. Full members do have to pay a fee, but not now. Full members can be tapped for holding an office in the society or a position on the committee.

The proposed constitution is based on another society which has been operating for 10 years. There will be a board of 9 members. After each election, one-third will be serving for 3 years, one-third for 2 years and the rest for one year. The president-elect, president, and past president are on the board for 3, 2, and 1 year, respectively. The president-elect, after one year, becomes the president; the president, after one year, becomes the past president. Members at large have 2 serving in each category: 3, 2 and 1 year. The president chairs board meetings and everyone on the board has equal power (everything is by majority vote). Today, as an inaugural event, we will elect all 9 board members.

The board is responsible for running the society, for selecting members of any committees and for selecting the treasurer. Committee members can be any full member, whether or not on the board. There must be a public officer in Victoria for non-profit corporations. Aside from that, the rules are somewhat incomplete. The Victorian Consumer Affairs website requirements for non-profit incorporation are addressed in the constitution, but many other aspects of their model constitution are not, although they probably should be. The board should look at this matter. For example, the constitution states what constitutes a quorum for the board, but not for the AGM. We need to have some idea of a quorum; for today, I declare those present to be a quorum.

Member: For the board members, what financial liability do they have?

Kevin Korb: We have a motion to incorporate today. If we are incorporated, then there won't be any liability.

Motion: That the constitution as circulated will be adopted.

Moved by: Kevin Korb

Seconded by: Jenifer Ticehurst

Member: Will the constitution be highly modified?

Kevin Korb: Modifications can also be done in special general meetings. The board should have a sub-committee to look into the constitution before putting a new version to the membership in an electronic special general meeting.

Member: We need to amend the constitution: we need to cross out the assets going to the AAAS in the case of dissolution.

Kevin Korb: That's a version error, but I think we can leave it to the board to correct it.

Resolution: Motion **carried** unanimously.

Kevin Korb: The sponsorship we have for tonight's event is enough, but will not be enough for running the Society.

Motion: Students pay \$0 and full fee members pay \$50

Moved by: Kevin Korb

Seconded by: Carmel Pollino

John Bally: How about a nominal amount, say \$5, for students, because people don't value free things.

Member: No point in paying \$5 — \$5 would upset me more than \$20.

Ann Nicholson: I think it would be good to get students in for free.

John Bally: If it's actually \$0, then people will sign up for no reason, lose interest, and it will cost us.

Ann Nicholson: We can look at it, and see what happens in the first year.

Carl Smith: Is \$50 for 35 members going to be enough to fund things?

Kevin Korb: It depends what the fees cover. Future meetings could charge a registration fee. I would suggest the membership fee be used strictly for on-going costs of the Society, such as administration, the website, advertising, etc.

Ann Nicholson: I think we should charge for attendance, precisely because people don't value it if they don't pay for it. It would be good to have \$50 to start off with.

Kevin Korb: \$50 is sustainable.

Resolution: Motion carried unanimously
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5 Incorporation

Edin Sarajlic: [Edin notes that he is not a lawyer. His account here is informal.] I will address questions on liability and auditing. Auditing isn't required unless you make more than \$200,000 a year. Following are the benefits and disadvantages of an unincorporated organisation vs non-profit corporation. For an **unincorporated organisation**:

- No strict definition of unincorporated organisation
- Not a legal entity, but there are still legally binding rules
- Bank accounts, liabilities are all with the individual members of the committee, liabilities are all targeted at the individuals, not organisation
- No binding rules, but money donated to organisation is used by the organisation
- The organisation can refer to itself by name
- Can have a logo

The disadvantages are:

- Organising committee members are legally and financially liable
- Government funding usually requires it to be a legal entity

For a corporation:

- It is a legal entity
- Money donated to the organisation must be used by the organisation
- Simpler and cheaper than a company

The disadvantages are:

- Only applies to the current state you're in
- The alternative is to register as a Registered Australian Body (separate process completely)
- Slightly more disadvantages and costs
- Need annual meetings, annual statements
- Needs to adhere to a set of rules
- Costs are minimal, under \$200 a year

Carl Smith: What are the relative merits of being an Australian registered body vs state registered?

Edin Sarajlic: Australia-wide means a single registration.

Kevin Korb: Does Australia-wide registration come with limited liability?

Ann Nicholson: If we are incorporated in one state, but are running things in another state, are there any issues?

Nicole Mathers: I'm a member of another society, Australian Society of Soil Science. We registered Australia-wide, and also registered in each individual state.

Kevin Korb: I suggest further research be done.

Carl Smith: Are there any limitations, for example, if the president (or members of the board) are from another state?

Nicole Mathers: In the Soil Science Society membership fees go to the federal body, but meetings, etc. are per state.

Kevin Korb: The original motion was that the society become a non-profit corporation in the state of Victoria. However, I propose an altered motion.

Motion: We authorise the board of directors to investigate the subject of incorporation and pursue incorporation and pursue registration Australia-wide and whatever else is needed to get incorporation Australia-wide.

Moved by: Kevin Korb

Seconded by: Carl Smith

Carl Smith: I think if we can get the Australian body, but with liability coverage, that's the way to go.

Kevin Korb: Agreed.

Carmel Pollino: It is worth checking with Mark about how it's done for his risk analysis society — they are both Australian and New Zealand.

Resolution: Motion **carried** unanimously

6 Nominations for board positions

- President-elect
- President
- Past president
- 6 members at large

6.1 Election of president

- Kevin Korb nominates **Ann Nicholson**.
- Nomination for **Carl Smith**.

Results Ann Nicholson 15 votes
 Carl Smith 0 votes

Result: Ann Nicholson elected president.

6.2 Election of president-elect

- Ann Nicholson nominates **Carl Smith**.

Result: Since nominations equals positions, **Carl Smith** elected president-elect.

6.3 Election of past president

- Ann Nicholson nominates **Kevin Korb**.
- Nomination for **Carmel Pollino**.

Results Kevin Korb 15 votes
 Carmel Pollino 0 votes

Result: **Kevin Korb** elected past president.

6.4 Members at large: 3 year positions

- Carmel Pollino nominates **Jenifer Ticehurst**.
- Self-nomination for **Andrew Ling**.
- Nomination for **Tali Boneh**.
- Carl Smith nominates **Carmel Pollino**.

Results Jenifer Ticehurst 9 votes
 Andrew Ling 2 votes
 Tali Boneh 5 votes
 Carmel Pollino 10 votes

Result: **Jenifer Ticehurst** and **Carmel Pollino** elected members at large for 3 years

6.5 Members at large: 2 year positions

- Ann Nicholson nominates **Tali Boneh**.
- Owen Woodberry nominates **Andrew Ling**.

Result: Since nominations equals positions, **Tali Boneh** and **Andrew Ling** elected members at large for 2 years

6.6 Members at large: 1 year positions

- Nomination for **Adam Liedloff**.
- Nomination for **John Bally**.
- Nomination for **Paul Dalglish**.
- Nomination for **Mark Burgman** (rescinded).
- Nomination for **Greg Hood**.

Results

Adam Liedloff	10 votes
John Bally	5 votes
Paul Dalglish	1 votes
Greg Hood	3 votes

Result: Adam Liedloff and John Bally elected members at large for one year.

Kevin Korb: I'd like to add an item. How do we pronounce ABNMS? How about abbey?

Member: Or abs?

Carl Smith: Abnims!

Kevin Korb: How about abnormals?

2010-12	President-Elect: Carl Smith	Member: Jenifer Ticehurst	Member: Carmel Pollino
2010-11	President: Ann Nicholson	Member: Tali Boneh	Member: Andrew Ling
2010	Past-President: Kevin Korb	Member: Adam Liedloff	Member: John Bally

Table 1: **Board of Directors, ABNMS, as of 1 Jan 2010.**

7 ABNMS 2010: Location and dates

Kevin Korb: Any suggestions for hosting the next meeting? How about Canberra?

Ann Nicholson: We've had Brisbane and Melbourne.

Carmel Pollino: Yes, Canberra will host it. [Carmel Pollino and Jenifer Ticehurst agreed to host ABNMS'10.]

Kevin Korb: On dates for meetings: if we incorporate in Victoria, we need to do meetings within 5 months of the close of the fiscal year. Considering academic schedules, that suggests we should do it at the end of November, in the last week perhaps.

8 Any other business

Ann Nicholson: There is a little slot at the end of tomorrow. If people want to think or talk about it over dinner, do we want to organise or promote training courses, accreditation, or checking of BNs. As a professional organisation, we need to check CVs to see if they know something about BNs. So what does that mean for what we want to do — over the next 5-10 years, not 6 months.

Members: [General discussion about the need for accreditation and training ensued.]

Carl Smith: A rotating short course would be a good idea, we've run some at the University of Queensland. We don't get enough solely at UQ to justify it, but there would be enough across the 3 states. For example, we got 50 people at the meeting in Brisbane (i.e. the 2008 one). We could run short courses in the mid-year break.

Ann Nicholson: We would need to talk about what length of course. If it's any less than 2 days, it's not worth it, but if it's a week, people won't commit time to it. The board could develop a proposal and circulate it to members.

Member: I suggest that we could have 2 courses, one beginner and one more experienced.

Kevin Korb: Or a layered course that people can step into when appropriate.

Ann Nicholson: I would really want to have an advanced course. Also, a possible programming course.

Kevin Korb: We could setup a blog to discuss these things.

Carl Smith: We could even develop a primer.

Ann Nicholson: I mentioned in the tutorial to Carmel that we could cover modelling tricks, common modelling errors, etc. It would be good to have this because it's not in textbooks, etc. We could put together and make a publication from the society.

Kevin Korb: Thank you for helping to launch the society. Meeting adjourned.

A ABNMS 2009 Agenda

A.1 Attendance & apologies

A.2 Overview & background

Presentation by Ann Nicholson

A.3 Treasurer's report

Presentation by Ann Nicholson

A.4 Membership fees

A.5 Constitution

Presentation by Kevin Korb

Motion: That the constitution as circulated be adopted

A.6 Incorporation

Presentation by Edin Sarajlic

Motion: That the society become a non-profit corporation in the state of Victoria

A.7 Nominations and election to board positions

- President-elect
- President
- Past president
- 6 general members

A.8 ABNMS 2010: Location and dates

A.9 Any other business