



Minutes of the SGLMG Annual General Meetings 2023

In person

Held 9 December 2023 at
University of Sydney Business School, 21 Codrington St, Darlington.

Meeting Chair: Cath Glasson-Ashburn (Chair)

9:10am

1. Welcome

Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco, Chair of the Board (Chair OB), introduced Brandon Bear Interim Company Secretary (Company Secretary).

2. Declaration of Proxies

The Company Secretary advised that there were 472 proxies were received of which 56 are directed and 416 are not directed. 71 proxies were held by the Chair.

3. Declaration of Quorum

Quorum was noted.

The Chair OB continued with the meeting introduction, invited and introduced the Board appointed Chair of the meeting Cath Glasson-Ashburn.

4. Meeting Open

The Chair opened the meeting at **9:12am**.

Acknowledgement of Country was observed and 78ers recognised.

The Chair noted the attendance of auditor Daniel Cunningham EY, Directors, staff and members.

The Chair provided an introduction and explanation as to how Chair proxy votes will be utilised:

- **Election of Directors:** Chair proxy votes were lodged with the Returning Officer and cast at the commencement of the meeting and were directed per the independent People & Nominations Committee recommendations.
- **Constitutional motions:** Chair proxy votes will be directed per Board recommendations.
- **Member Motions:** Chair proxy votes will be abstained. Given our commitment to ensuring all members had the chance to be informed in advance of AGM motions and to respect the decisions of those who based attendance on the information provided, no off-the-floor Member Motions will be accepted during this AGM.
- **Procedural Motions:** Chair proxy votes will be directed to ensure for a democratic AGM that supports the voices of all members. A procedural motion is a specific kind of motion that relates only to how this meeting is undertaken

The Chair noted the following housekeeping items:

- Item 10 of the agenda was withdrawn by the Proposer, the Board of SGLMG – The review of the Constitution
- All voting will be performed by holding up voting cards.
- Questions not answered during the meeting will be responded to within 30 days.
- All documents from the AGM will be available on the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras website.
- Respectful conduct from those in attendance was requested.
- A quiet space available if required.
- The AGM would be recorded for minutes purpose only.
- Ballot papers signed by company secretary may be lodged up until 11am.
- Ballot counting process will take place Monday evening following the AGM. The result to be emailed Tuesday.
- The Chair read the AGM Code of Conduct.

5. Apologies

Apologies were received from Michael Rolik, Steph Sands and Fran Bowron.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

6. Acceptance of Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2022

The minutes of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Annual General Meeting 2022 were **ACCEPTED**.

A point of order was raised asking for the total votes. The Chair advised that the total votes were:

For: 200
Against: 155
Abstained: 0

7. Chairperson's Report

Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco (Chair OB) presented the Chairperson's Report. **Key items of note:**

- It has been a 45-year journey from the 78ers to the delivery of Sydney WorldPride 2023. The first WorldPride to be held in the southern hemisphere.
- Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras season events were sold out.
- Parade returned to the now heritage listed Oxford Street route. This was the first time a sitting Australian Prime Minister marched in the Parade. The Parade ABC broadcast was the most watched program of the night.
- Chair OB thanked all staff members and volunteers.
- Memorable achievements of last five years included effective financial management and the future requires continued good governance.
- Heading towards 50th anniversary the organisation is looking at being better rather than bigger, to be a rallying point for Asia- Pacific families, a trusted partner, respected member of the international pride community and instrument for change.
- The winding back of LGBTQIA+ rights around the world is a reminder not to be complacent.

Retiring after six years, the Chair OB thanked people who mentored him through his tenure, the continuing board and the newly appointed CEO, Gil Beckwith.

8. CEO Report

Gil Beckwith (CEO) presented the CEO Report. **Key items of note:**

- Season 2023 of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival delivered the biggest year ever including both the 45th anniversary and Sydney WorldPride 2023.
- This season was the first full suite of festival events since the pandemic.
- 2023 festival highlights were shared noting First Nations focussed events and initiatives, and Parade returning to Oxford Street.
- Continued organisational goal is to move from seasonal contracts to ongoing employment and facilitated meaningful reengagement with communities.

9. Financial Statements and Report

Gil Beckwith (CEO) presented the Financial Statements and Report. **Key items of note:**

- The approved budget was based on a surplus of \$65,853 the previous year.
- The final audited result was a surplus of \$176,253. All events were sold out.
- This result was noted as a culmination of over 3 years in planning for a joint Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras / Sydney WorldPride 2023 festival experience that attracted record crowds.
- \$235,594 was distributed in grants to support LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Revenue for the year was a record \$9,778,238.
- Total overhead costs were \$2.479m.
- The 45th anniversary of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras was celebrated at Carriageworks.

The CEO thanked the Chair, Interim Company Secretary, returning officer, staff, auditors, Auslan interpreters, the Board for volunteering and assisting the transitioning from CFO to CEO, all volunteers and the retiring Chair of the Board, Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco.

The CEO recognised Sydney WorldPride's Chair, Damien Hodgkinson, Board, CEO, Kate Wickett, staff and volunteers.

10. Questions:

The Chair requested questions from members.

Q: Note 16 of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Financial Statements notes a Liability of \$3.3m for Deferred Income. Does this indicate a heavy reliance on prepaid sponsorship (~50%) of all income, and a risk of future survival of the organisation?

A: The Financial Accounts are audited twice a year to determine whether the organisation is a Going Concern (financially stable) – See Note 3 (m). Current liabilities are assed with current assets. Net assets \$1.573m exceed current liabilities by \$1.380m. The current sponsorships have been created in partnership with Sydney WorldPride. There will be new sponsors in 2025.

Q: Fundraising Activities: Is bucket shaking the only fundraising activity, and why is it depicted in Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and not Mardi Gras Arts?

A: The funds raised by bucket shaking are banked in Mardi Gras Arts. This activity is primarily performed at Fair Day. The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras website also receives donations.

Q: Has Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras received requests from sponsors to stay silent on political issues, or are these decisions made by the Board?

A: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras receives no pressure from sponsors in relation to political issues. The organisation can refuse sponsorship and has in the past due to misalignment with political and social issues.

Q: Explain the use of terms ‘activation’ and ‘activity’.

A: There is no difference. Activities were described as reactivated after limitations of COVID.

Q: Transphobia and queerphobia have increased. What did Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras do in response to the bashing in Belfield, and as a queer organisation what is intended with ensuring antidiscrimination legislation passes to protect community?

A: After Sydney WorldPride, there was a 30% increase in hate crimes. Meetings with the NSW Police aim to provide safe spaces for the LGBTQI+ community. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is also having discussions with politicians about gay conversion policies is working with Equality Australia striving to improve LGBTQI+ wellbeing.

Q: What is Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras’ financial outlook regarding surplus? And what is being done to overcome challenges such as smaller attendance numbers following Sydney WorldPride?

A: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is taking a cautious budget approach. Reengagement with the LGBTQI+ community and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is ongoing, and the organisation is still recovering from the impacts of COVID and Sydney WorldPride. The organisation recognises these difficulties and has a strong retained earnings balance, however, a surplus for 2024 is questionable. There are also Parade production expenditure increases, including increased costs for safety and compliance measures.

The Chair invited members to vote on the reports.

Motion: That the members of this meeting accept the reports of the CEO and Chairperson and the Financial Statements and Report.

Proposer: Alice Anderson

Seconded: Paul Savage

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands.

11. Lifetime Membership

In accordance with Clause 3.4 of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Constitution, the Board has proposed that the Members consider and, if thought fit, pass the following as an ordinary resolution:

Motion: That Paul Savage, Michael Woodhouse and Stevie Clayton, having been honoured as Hall of Fame recipients, be granted Life Membership in the Company, noting that upon approval of the Members that these persons shall be entered on the Register as life members and shall not be required to pay membership fees in accordance with the Company's constitution.

Proposer: Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco

Seconded: Liz Dods

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands

12. Election of directors

The item was withdrawn

13. Items of business requested by the board

An Explanatory Memorandum was provided to all members detailing Board Motions 1-3 relating to Constitutional Changes. This memorandum put forward the position of the Board for each motion.

Board Motion 1: Adoption of a new Constitution for SGLMG:

To consider, and if thought fit, to pass the following as a special resolution:

'That the Constitution of SGLMG be and is replaced with a new constitution in the form set out in Annexure A of this Notice of Meeting (New Constitution).'

Proposer: Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco

Secunder: Brandon Bear

Chair OB spoke to the motion. The motion was generally discussed by the members present, and questions were asked and responded to. Members spoke for and against the motions.

Procedural Motion: Increase the time limit to 3 mins for all motions noting this will lead to an increase of 35 mins to the total meeting time

For: 229

Opposed: 283

Abstained: Chair

The Procedural Motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

Procedural Motion: Increase time limit to 3 mins for Board motions only.

The resolution to accept the Procedural Motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands. The time limit for Board motions was increased to 3 minutes.

Procedural Motion: That an extra three speakers be added for Board Motion 1.

For: 180
Opposed: 167
Abstain: 71

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands. An extra three speakers were added for Board Motion 1.

After additional conversation, Chair OB withdrew Motions 1, 2 and 3.

14. Items of business requested by the members

Procedural Motion: That the meeting be extend by 30 minutes.

The resolution to accept the Procedural Motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands

MOTION 4: Gender Affirmation Leave

1. Express its public support for the proposed claim for paid and annual gender affirmation/transition leave, and also recommends its application across the workforce;
2. Write to the Premier expressing support for the proposal of gender affirmation leave in the state public sector, as detailed in the Equality Bill; and
3. Write to the President of Local Government NSW, and the Mayors of Inner West, City of Sydney, and Randwick expressing support for gender affirmation leave in the sector.

Proposer: Evan Gray
Secunder: Antony Restifo

The proposer spoke to the motion. Members spoke for and against the motions.

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands

MOTION 5: Parade Bans

1. That floats for the NSW Police, Australian Federal Police, NSW Corrective Services and the Australian Defence Force be removed from the Mardi Gras Parade. For the reasons of; Responsibility for First Nations Deaths in Custody, and all other Deaths in Custody; Violence exhibited towards LGBTQI people; In the case of the Defence Force, the waging of imperial war in Afghanistan and elsewhere.
2. That this ban remains in place until all recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody have been implemented

Proposer: Rohen Snowball

Seconder: Luc Velez

Member Toby Walmsley spoke in favour of the motions. Members spoke for and against the motions.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 175

Against: 303

The resolution to accept the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

MOTION 6: Mardi Gras Police Accord

Cancel the Mardi Gras Police Accord, and in doing so:

- a) Condemn the use of drug dog program used by the NSW police and heavy police presence during Mardi Gras,
- b) Abolish the use of so-called 'decency checks' by police during the parade, as they are an act of sanctioned sexual abuse and assault by police
- c) Stand for police abolition and stand in solidarity with Blak Lives Matter and to end deaths in custody,
- d) Support the right to protest and lift NSW's repressive protest restrictions

Proposer: Rohen Snowball

Seconder: Mikhael Burnard

The proposer of the motion Rohen Snowball delegated to Evan Gray to speak to the motion. Members spoke for and against the motions.

Procedural Motion: To amend Motion 6 by splitting it into two parts and remove wording to C.

The resolution to accept the Procedural Motion was **APPROVED** on a show of hands

The Chair requested a short break at 11.18am.

The Chair resumed the meeting at 11:24am.

MOTION 6a: Cancel the Mardi Gras Police Accord, and in doing so:

- a) Condemn the use of drug dog program used by the NSW police and heavy police presence during Mardi Gras,
- b) Abolish the use of so-called 'decency checks' by police during the parade, as they are an act of sanctioned sexual abuse and assault by police
- c) Stand in solidarity with Blak Lives Matter and to end deaths in custody,
- d) Support the right to protest and lift NSW's repressive protest restrictions

The member proposing the amended motion Luc Velez spoke in favour of the amended motion. Members spoke for and against the motions.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 296
Against: 147
Abstained: 75

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED**.

MOTION 6b

- c) Stand for police abolition and stand in solidarity with Blak Lives Matter and to end deaths in custody.

The member proposing the amended motion, Paul Savage, spoke in favour of the motion. Members spoke in for and against the motion.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 164
Against: 285
Abstained: 71

The resolution to accept the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

Procedural Motion: To not have no speakers for or against motions 7, 8 and 9.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 258
Against: 226

It was noted that the Chair opposed the motion.

The resolution to accept the procedural motion was **APPROVED**. No speakers for or against motions 7, 8 and 9 were to be heard.

MOTION 7: BDS – Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions

1. Proactively commits to upholding BDS by barring any future partnerships with or donations from Hewlett Packard, Siemens, AXA, Puma, Sodastream, Ahava, Sabra, or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates
2. Commits to accepting no partnership with or donations from the State of Israel
3. Condemns the Albanese government for its failure to stand in support of Palestinian civilians targeted by the IDF, and further condemns the Minns government for attempting to shut down dissent and demonstrations in support of Palestine

Proposer: Luc Velez
Secunder: Skip Blofield

The Chair asked for members to not talk as a procedural motion was approved that no speaking would occur.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 178
Against: 318
Abstained: 71

The resolution to accept the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

It was noted that a contingent of members began creating a disturbance. The Chair provided a warning that this would be the last chance before people will be asked to leave the meeting.

MOTION 8: American Express Partnership

End the sponsorship with American Express on the basis of their financial discrimination towards sex workers:

- That Mardi Gras condemn financial discrimination towards sex workers from any financial institution
- Mardi Gras officially endorse the decriminalisation campaigns in Queensland and South Australia - with all the amendments to bills or recommendations supported by Scarlet Alliance and/or peer-based state organisations including Respect and SIN SA
- Mardi Gras officially recognise that NSW has significant decriminalisation of many types of sex work, but that full decriminalisation should be passed into law

Proposer: Charlie Murphy

Seconder: Antony Restifo

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 179

Against: 300

Abstained: 71

The resolution to accept the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

It was noted that a contingent of members began creating a disturbance and used offensive language. Calls for Procedural motion to reinstate speaking times to speak on behalf of free Palestine

Points of order were raised. It was recognised that:

- Issues relating Palestine were not in the Items of Business and so cannot be heard.
- That Motions 7, 8 and 9 are to be rewritten in the affirmative.

These points of order were noted by the Chair.

Procedural Motion: That the AGM be closed and that motions 10, 11 and 12 not be heard.

The resolution to accept the procedural motion was **NOT CARRIED** on a show of hands. The meeting was to continue.

Procedural Motion: That a 5-to-10-minute break be provided.

The resolution to accept the procedural motion was **NOT CARRIED** on a show of hands. The meeting was to continue.

Members in attendance requested that the AGM Code of Conduct be enforced and that members in breach be evicted if required.

The Chair requested that all members show respect noting that if the conversation or members do or do not go their way, that they have been heard.

MOTION 9: QANTAS Partnership

1. Condemns the violent and brutal treatment of asylum seekers and refugees by the Australian government and the particular impact on LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees
2. Condemn the role that Qantas plays in deporting asylum seekers on behalf of the Australian government
3. Terminate sponsorship with Qantas on the basis of their violation of the human right to seek asylum and deportation of asylum seekers back to danger
4. Affirm ending mandatory detention, onshore and offshore detention, including reversing the repeal of Medevac legislation.
5. Affirm granting the permanent protection for all refugees onshore, including those on Temporary Protection Visas, Safe Haven Enterprise Visa, evacuees brought by Medevac, those on bridging visas, and all other relevant visas.

Proposer: Skip Blofield

Seconder: Lachlan Monsted

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 178

Against: 312

Abstained: 10

The resolution to accept the motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

MOTION 10: The Equality Bill

1. Send correspondence to the sitting members of the Labor and Liberal parties calling upon them to support the Equality Bill in full; and
2. Notify them that if they oppose the Equality Bill, then these MPs will not be welcome to march in the parade or be promoted through materials at Fair Day.

Proposer: Evan Gray

Secunder: Rohen Snowball

The member proposing the amended motion Evan Gray spoke in favour of the motions. No members spoke for and against the motions.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 289

Against: 51

Abstained: 71

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED**.

MOTION 11: Drag Performers Open Letter

1. Add SGLMG Mardi Gras as signatory to the open letter of drag performers and community members
2. Share a notice about the open letter to its e-mail list and share online.

Proposer: Evan Gray

Secunder: Rohan Snowball

The member proposing the amended motion Evan Gray spoke in favour of the motions. No members spoke for and against the motions.

The motion was put to a vote. A poll was taken to determine the vote.

For: 286

Against: 20

Abstained: 71

The resolution to accept the motion was **APPROVED**.

15. Motion of thanks to outgoing directors

The Company secretary proposed a motion to thank the outgoing Board members Giovanni Campolo-Arcdiaco, Louis Hudson, Corey Trembath, Kyriakos Gold and Skip Blofield for their contributions.

The proposed motion was unanimously **APPROVED** by acclamation.

Special thanks were given to Giovanni Campolo-Arcdiaco for six years on boards

16. General business

No further items of business were discussed.

The meeting closed at 12:21pm.