



British Pensions in Australia Inc.

ABN 42 186 383 389

Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 4 pm AEDT via ZOOM

Attending: Committee members: Patrick Edwards (President), Cheryl Harvey (Secretary), Brian Owles (Treasurer), Tony Walsh (Minutes Secretary), Wendy Harman and Jonathan Hobbs.

There were 15 other members present.

By invitation two guests: John Duffy Chairman of the International Consortium of British Pensioners (ICBP) (Antigua) and Ian Andexser, Chairman of the Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners (CABP) (Vancouver, British Columbia).

Apologies: Committee member Roger Tuffley and various members via email.

Opening: The meeting opened at 4 pm and it was agreed that the proceedings would be recorded.

Minutes of 2020 AGM: The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th November 2020 were approved.
Proposed by the President. Seconded by Phil Summerfield. Approved unanimously.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

President's Report: The President opened his report by saying this was the second year BPiA was holding a virtual meeting.

Hopefully, he said, next year we will be back to normal, whatever that is.

Mr. Edwards began his presentation by acknowledging the **Darramuragal** people, traditional custodians of the land on which he was situated, and he paid his respects to their elders past and present.

The past year, he said, was marked by the passing of the person who was instrumental in establishing BPiA, Jim Tilley. His dedication to the cause of ending the UK government's policy of frozen pensions remains an example to all of us.

Mr. Edwards welcomed three new committee members, Wendy Harman, Roger Tuffley and Jonathan Hobbs. Wendy, Roger, Jonathan and, of course, Tony Walsh are based in Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria respectively and provide us with a national perspective. He thanked his fellow committee members and expressed his appreciation for their contributions to our cause in what he said was a very trying year. Mr. Edwards gave special thanks to David Rumball, who has retired from the committee after many years of service to BPiA.

Mr, Edwards also mentioned Gillian Bullock who has polished his English on a number of occasions during the year. He thanked our volunteers who keep BPiA going: Michael Bingham, Trevor Collison, Geoff Dunsford, Bob Frost, Cheryl Harvey, Catherine Lim, Margaret Ross and Phil Summerfield.

Current activities

In his summary of BPiA activities, Mr. Edwards described the focus of our activities in Australia as increasing our membership numbers. Our income, he said, consists of membership fees and donations. More members means more income and more income means being able to do more to end the UK government frozen pension policy.

There are about 200,000 people in Australia receiving a UK pension. There are many more who have an entitlement but have not yet reached pension age. We have about 4,000 members so there is plenty of scope to increase our membership.

BPiA reminds Australian politicians whenever it can that the UK government policy is discrimination against Australians. We emphasise that it is not just immigrants who are affected. BPiA has members who were born in Australia who have worked in the UK and returned to Australia with an entitlement to a UK pension.

The Australian government estimates the UK government policy costs Australian taxpayers \$110 million a year. Mr. Edwards asked how many hospital beds could be provided with \$110 million a year?

BPiA members, he said, want a government in Australia that is as incensed about the unfair treatment of Australians as they are. Mr. Edwards expressed a hope that next year we will get an opportunity to make this known.

Activities in the UK

Mr. Edwards emphasised to members that the decision to end the frozen pensions policy will be made in London. He said that is why BPiA must concentrate its resources there.

The Canadian government puts the Australian government to shame in the way it doesn't give up in requesting a reciprocal social security agreement.

Mr Edwards reported that Tendo, BPiA's agent in London, are unrelenting in the way they continually push our campaign on our behalf. BPiA supports the MPs in the UK who have demonstrated sympathy for our campaign by joining the APPG on Frozen Pensions.

The Future

In describing prospects for the future, Mr. Edwards noted that BPiA has been campaigning for 20 years without changing the UK government policy.

He said that doesn't mean the policy cannot change. It means, he said, we cannot give up. Eventually, changing the policy will be the easier choice for the government. Eventually, they will give up.

Mr. Edwards said he couldn't promise this policy change will occur in 2022. What he could promise was that if we give up, the UK policy will never change.

In 2022, he hoped BPiA will make itself better known. He hoped that we will exploit new methods of communication. He hoped that BPiA will have a presence at events that attract people who are likely to be UK pension recipients.

In 2022, he promised that we will pursue the decision makers in the UK with renewed vigour.

In 2022, we promised that we will exploit and develop the support we receive from the APPG on frozen pensions.

In summary, he said, 2022 is going to be an active year for BPiA. BPiA will take the fight to wherever it must be taken to achieve our objective: Fair Play for British Pensions in Australia.

Cheryl Harvey proposed and Jonathan Hobbs seconded that the report be adopted. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

The treasurer reported that financial position is much improved due to the introduction of new computerised systems, Membee, that have made it much easier for member's to both renew their membership and to donate. We have reduced our costs as we no longer use the Edgecliff office. BPiA contribute about \$4,500 monthly to the International Consortium of British Pensions (ICBP) which use it to fund the cost of using TENDO in London and this is matched by the Canadian Alliance of British Pensions (CABP) He was pleased to report that BPiA is in a satisfactory financial situation.

Proposed by TW that the financial report be adopted. Seconded by Phil Summerfield. Adopted unanimously.

Election of Committee:

The President reported that valid nominations had been received for the existing seven members of the committee and there being seven positions, he declared them elected.

There were no new nominations, but the President said he would always welcome anyone who wished to participate. He invited anyone who wished to do so to email or telephone him.

Visitors to the Meeting:

The President welcomed John Duffy, Chairman of ICBP, located in Antigua. John thanked BPiA for the monthly contribution. He said it is this money together with a similar amount from CABP that has enabled Tendo to be employed. They have made substantial progress in London over the last four years.

The President also welcomed Colin Rainsbury, a BPiA member located in Vancouver, British Columbia, and a board member of CABP. Mr. Rainsbury also thanked BPiA for their support. He said they missed Jim Tilley who brought a wealth of knowledge to ICBP meetings.

Tony Walsh asked a question of John Duffy about the fact that over 90% of frozen pensioners live in Commonwealth countries. John Duffy responded that ICBP do use the fact that the majority of the pensioners affected by the UK's frozen pension policy live in Commonwealth countries to promote the cause and at present it is concentrating on the Windrush generation.

Desmond Woods said that he had raised this matter at a meeting with the Minister for Pensions in Canberra to no avail. He also thought that much more should be made of the fact that people who now have left the UK are costing the health services of the country to which they have they moved, and the UK is saving that money. He had pointed out that the Commonwealth Charter states that there should be no discrimination between members but was told it was not the done thing to raise such issues at CHOGM meetings.

Ken Jeffery said that he felt it important to get the message out to the Australian public that the frozen pensions policy is costing Australian taxpayers a lot of money. The President said that work was underway to engage a consultant involved to advise BPiA to propagate this message and others to the Australian public.

Closing

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.32 pm.