

## **ANZAMEMS President's Report – Annual General Meeting, March 2018**

The past year has seen ANZAMEMS achieve a number of significant milestones. One of the most important is that the Association now holds a year's funds in reserve. This is the result of the exceptional work of our Treasurer, Peter Sherlock, assisted by the Finance sub-committee established in 2016. Creating a reserve guarantees that, should there be any change in royalties we receive via Project Muse, which remains our key source of income, we will be able to continue to produce *Parergon* to a high standard, to support our prizes and PATS, and to employ an Executive Director through any period of transition. It also lays the groundwork for ANZAMEMS to begin to plan for the future. Kriston Rennie has led a sub-committee this year with the aim of structuring our conversations around what that future might look like. I encourage all members to get in touch with the ANZAMEMS Futures sub-committee in the coming year to share their views about where our efforts should be focused in guiding the Association into the 2020s.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution to the Association made by a number of key members of the ANZAMEMS General Committee in the course of the past year. In addition to Peter and Kriston, I would like to extend particular thanks to the *Parergon* Editor, Sue Broomhall, and Reviews Editor, H  l  ne Sirantoine, both of whom have worked tremendously hard to develop not only a new budgeting structure for *Parergon*, which has played an important role in allowing us to establish our financial reserve, but also a new committee structure for the journal that provides early career scholars in Australasia with a unique opportunity to gain editorial experience.

I'd also like to extend my gratitude to those members of the Committee whose terms come to an end this year or who have otherwise chosen to stand down. We are extremely grateful for all their hard work on behalf of the organisation: Clare Monagle (Secretary), who has been the heart and soul of the General Committee for the last few years, a member of the Finance sub-committee and who has played a key role in a number of important changes including the introduction of our Equity & Diversity policy; Stephanie Downes (Vice-President, Australia), who led our Equity & Diversity sub-committee in its first year and who is leaving us to bring a new person into the world – we wish her and her partner the very best!; Madi Williams (Communications Officer), who kindly stepped in after the 2017 AGM to take on this important role and who has kept the Association well-informed; and Kriston, who steps down as a representative of the general membership this year. I'm also very grateful to Ellie Crookes, Hannah Pym, and Aidan Norrie all of whom served the Association as postgraduate

representatives in 2017/18 making a very positive contribution to both the General Committee and to a range of its sub-committees.

Before moving on to specific issues, I think it important to acknowledge the hard work of all ANZAMEMS's General Committee members. Their efforts ensure the smooth running of the day-to-day business of the Association. Committee service is hard work but offers a genuine opportunity to make an important contribution to fostering the well-being of medieval and early modern studies in Australasia.

### **General Committee Business**

The period since the 2017 AGM has seen the General Committee working extremely hard on behalf of the Association's membership. The series of sub-committees set up in 2015 continue to explore new ways in which to advance ANZAMEMS's primary goals. Each sub-committee is chaired and staffed primarily by members of the General Committee. Amongst the considerable work being undertaken by sub-committees, it is particularly important to flag the work of the Conference sub-committee (Chair: Daniel Anlezark), which is overseeing the preparation of our 2019 conference. The conference will be hosted by the **University of Sydney** with a joint conference committee comprising members from that institution and Macquarie University. The work of the sub-committee's members is at the heart of this key event in our calendar.

Looking to the future, I'd like to use the opportunity of this AGM to invite **Expressions of Interest** for our **2021 conference**. If you are interested but uncertain quite what is required and what support ANZAMEMS is able to offer, I would be delighted to discuss, informally, what hosting a conference involves. Those keen to do so might also contact the Secretary, who will provide a copy of the conference guidelines. These guidelines have been designed by the General Committee to inform and support those interested in planning future conferences. The current General Committee roster also includes Sarah Ross (Vice-President, New Zealand) who successfully chaired our recent Wellington conference in 2017.

At the 2016 AGM the membership voted to establish the Finance sub-committee (Chair: Peter Sherlock). This sub-committee has continued its assessment of expenditure across the Association with a view to ensuring the future sustainability of PATS, prizes, administrative support, and high quality journal production. It has now established, as I noted above, a budget that ensures the Association holds a year's revenue in reserve. Peter has also re-

examined our approach to conference budgeting specifically: we are, as a consequence, able to provide future conference convenors with a detailed breakdown of the support available from the Association.

Following the 2017 AGM a permanent sub-committee was established to address issues of equity and diversity (Chair: Stephanie Downes). This committee has now produced its own guidelines for future conferences, approved earlier this year by the General Committee and available to members on request. The official ANZAMEMS equity and diversity statement, adopted at the 2017 AGM, now appears in *Parergon*.

A Constitutional Amendment sub-committee, which I myself chair, completed its review of the Association's constitution in the first half of 2017. This review was necessitated by legal changes in Western Australia. I'd like to thank Aidan Norrie who played an important role in developing the new document before he left the Committee to take up a scholarship in the UK. The proposed constitution was circulated to the membership six months prior to the 2018 AGM, as is required under the terms of the current constitution. No comments were received from the membership. If passed at this AGM, the new constitution will be registered with the government of Western Australia later this year. One minor 'tweak' that was not necessitated by legal changes is that the General Committee proposes raising the number of Committee members from 14 to 15 to assist with increasing business.

I would like to thank all of the sub-committee chairs for their hard work over the last few months. We will review the work of all the sub-committees at the AGM and I anticipate most will continue into 2018/19 with the aim of ensuring ANZAMEMS remains a vibrant, active, and responsive organisation. I would welcome expressions of interest from the membership if you feel you might have particular skills to contribute to the work being undertaken by the General Committee in any of the above areas.

A full list of the sub-committees and their new membership will be posted on ANZAMEMS website following the AGM.

### **Administration**

The 'behind the scenes' administration of ANZAMEMS continues to evolve. Marina Gerzić transitioned from Acting Membership and Administrative Secretary to an appointment as the Association's first Executive Administrator following the 2017 AGM, a position in which she continues to undertake excellent work in support of the General Committee and the

membership. The new role combines key activities around membership and administration with a broader communications portfolio. The Finance sub-committee is currently working with Marina to establish an annual remuneration package for the position following a detailed assessment of the hours completed by Marina in its first year.

### **Postgraduate Advanced Training seminars**

2017 saw a successful PATS held at the end of the conference on the 11 February:

*Marginalia and Markings: Reading Early Modern and Medieval Readers* at the National Library of New Zealand. It featured Professor Lorna Hutson (Oxford), Associate Professor Rosalind Smith (Newcastle, Australia), Dr Malcolm Mercer (Royal Armouries, Tower of London), and Dr Anthony Tedeschi (National Library of New Zealand).

Guidelines are now available for those interested in hosting future PATS and I would encourage anyone with ideas to contact the Secretary or myself to discuss these further.

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Looking ahead to the rest of the year and to our future conference in Sydney, I would like to encourage the membership to make the most of the Association's online presence. The new website continued to develop in 2017/18 under the guidance of Marina and Madi Williams; it provides an excellent resource for scholars in this hemisphere. It is my hope that it will become a first point of reference for those in the rest of the world who, perhaps as a result of encountering our journal, are curious to know exactly what goes on in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. It is also to be hoped that it will become a reference point for non-academics in Australasia seeking expertise in our field. I am particularly interested in exploring ways in which it may become a platform through which to raise awareness of new digital research.

In ending this report, I would like to thank, in particular, our outgoing Secretary, Clare Monagle, and our outgoing Vice-President, Australia, Stephanie Downes. I am deeply indebted to Clare and Stephanie and to all the Committee members on whose hard work, freely given time, patience, and tremendous efforts are built the foundations that ensure ANZAMEMS remains the friendly and supportive Association that it is.

President, Chris Jones

March 2018