

**MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

TUESDAY 17th OCTOBER 2017 @ 6:30pm

Auckland Women's Centre
4 Warnock Street, Grey Lynn
Auckland

Meeting called to order and guests welcomed by Rebecca Holdsworth at 6:40pm. Agenda for the evening reviewed.

1. Remarks by Dame Susan Devoy, Race Relations Commissioner

Dame Susan welcomed new CEO Dr Michele Cox, and recognized and outgoing CEO Marian Kleist's contribution to the organization. Dame Susan recognizes the contribution of board members. Our role is to be a voice for the most vulnerable in society and continued focus is required to encourage Government to take notice.

2. Apologies

Sue Elliot, ASST Member; Kate Telford, Hesketh Henry; Pippa Coombe, Waitemata Local Board; Amanda Aye, NZ Red Cross; Helen Walsh, ASST Member; Marian Kleist, former ASST CEO; Marie Leadbeater, ASST Member; Celia Brandon, Red Cross; Marie Smith, ASST Member.

3. Minutes from 2016 AGM

The 2016 Minutes were accepted as true and correct.

Moved: Andrea Smyth

Seconded: Anchali Anandanayagam

Matters arising: None

3. AGM Reports

The *President's Report*, presented by Rebecca Holdsworth. Rebecca identified a few highlights in 2017:

- ASST met its strategic objectives for: sustainability; communications and service delivery in a difficult environment with a considerable demand for our services.
- On behalf of the board, Rebecca acknowledge the efforts of ASST dedicated staff: Marian Kleist, former CEO; Jenny Bilby, former Social Worker; Freyja Stocker, Social Worker; Dr Michele Cox, CEO; and Andrea Symthe, Office Manager.

ASST also faces several challenges, including:

- The increasing demand for our services, both from an increase in arriving asylum seekers and the struggle to get access to services for which our clients have an entitlement.
- The difficult circumstances from which our clients come, which takes a toll on the team.

ASST have an optimistic view of the future, following a smooth succession from outgoing CEO, Marian Kleist to new CEO Dr Michele Cox. The ASST board will have an increased focus on building stronger relationships with the Refugee sector and Government.

The *Treasurer's Report* was presented by Tracy Hickman. Tracy offered several key points:

- The organisation has been working to fill the funding gap, and as a result of the efforts of the Fundraising Committee, led by Tracy Hickman and curator Alix Bachmann, the successful FrameWorks events means we have a healthy surplus this year.
- Sustainability and fundraising remain a key focus for ASST and lessons learnt from FrameWorks will be taken into the future, the board are looking to do a series of smaller fundraisers rather than a bigger event.
- Thanks to Ben Hurley, who supported ASST with the proceeds from a comedy evening.

- Thanks to the sponsors of ASST, including Foundation North Trust, JR McKenzie as well as others listed in the Treasurers report.

Overall over the next 12 months the board is seeking to reduce its reliance on grants and seek sustainable fundraising sources such as donations.

The Executive Officer's Report was presented by Dr Michele Cox, who joined ASST earlier this year. Michele highlighted a number of interesting changes in the industry:

- There were 434 claims of Asylum in the last 12 months
- 61% male and 56% of those between 18 - 29
- While small numbers compared to Europe, this is a 60% uplift on the previous year.
- Approvals are at around 30% and decisions are taking longer than previously.

The increase in people seeking asylum and the Auckland housing crisis, combined with longer times for claim approvals means that it is harder to transition clients out of the Hostel and Flats, and there are more people requiring accommodation and support. Jenny and Freyja have been proactive in upskilling and supporting clients through this time.

Looking forward to 2018:

- ASST along with other organisations in the sector will be working with the Olympic committee to increase engagement and awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues.
- The focus on funding will continue, JR McKenzie are recognized as a significant funding partner. While there is no short-term risk, long term sustainability work will continue with efforts to diversify fundraising sources.

Michele offers her thanks to the board, in particular, Tracy and Rebecca for their support and retiring board members Sirpa and Keith. Also thanks to Marian for a smooth transition and handover and to Andrea and Freyja for outstanding services provided.

Michele welcomed new board members and offers thanks to our clients, welcomed, supported and thriving in New Zealand.

No questions were received pertaining to the three reports. Acceptance of the reports:

Moved: Anchali Anandanayagam

Seconded: Fiona Taler

4. Appointment of Executive Committee

The following individuals were nominated for membership of the Executive Committee and special positions:

Returning board members:

- Rebecca Holdsworth (President)
- Anchali Anandanayagam (Vice President)
- Tracey Hickman (Treasurer)
- Laura Fear (Secretary)
- Fiona Taler

New board members:

- Debby Bell
- Rez Gardi
- Carsten Bockemuehl

Moved: Andrea Smythe

Seconded: Keith Locke

Retiring Board Members:

- Erin, Phillipe and Shyria have had to stand down during the year and thanks for their service.
- The AGM also marks the retirement of Sirpa and Keith, and the board thank them for the service to the board over the past several years.

5. Appointment of an Auditor

William Buck were nominated as the ASST Auditor.

Moved: Anchali Anandanayagam

Seconded: Fiona Taler

6. Any Other Business

The Board acknowledge the contribution of outgoing CEO Marian Kliest and welcome incoming CEO Dr Michele Cox. Thanks to Marian for hard work and smooth transition.

The artworks left over from FrameWorks are displayed tonight and are for sale, please make an offer.

Please save the dates for:

- The ARSSG (Auckland Resettlement Sector Steering Group) Summit on 2nd November.
- The ASST Fast Fundraiser, Juice Fast on 3rd and 4th February.

Welcome to **Brian Johnson**, previous treasurer of ARCI for over 6 years. Now with International Justice Advocates Limited. Brian highlighted a few key challenges in their work:

- The number of refugee lawyers are diminishing, due to low rates for refugee law making it no longer viable for lawyers to practice.
- Refugee legal aid received around \$500k per year however billable hours for the organization are over \$1m.
- People are coming from high security risk countries, often they live in fear and live outside of Auckland for security reasons, known 50 individuals who are in this situation.
- The pass rate is now so low that the organization now recommends seeking employment appeals assessors are criminal prosecution backgrounds with lower pass rates 78% failure.
- It is difficult to get work visas for people on second appeal, the lack of income forces poor choices and the result is poor mental and physical health.
- International Justice Advocates have won 152 of the 156 cases they have taken over their organisations lifetime. International Justice Advocates are continuing to work with government but there are difficulties as the law contradicts in places the UN Refugee convention.
- Recognised the work of ASST, and the services provided.

7. Presentation was made by former ASST client and success story, Zuhaib Abbas

A presentation was made by former ASST client Zuhaib Abbas about his experience as an asylum seeker and the support he received from ASST, which enabled him to successfully integrate into the NZ community and to be reunited with his children. It was a heartfelt presentation gratefully received by the AGM, giving attendees first hand insight into the difference ASST is making.

8. Presentation of ASST Strategic Plan by Dr Michele Cox.

Previous plan finished in June 2017 which coincided with new CEO coming on board. The ASST board reviewed the plan and accepted a new strategic plan with input from ASST's staff.

The high level plan will be our key focus over the next 15 months, then go back to a three year planning cycle. The high level plan includes:

Revised Vision: *A New Zealand where Asylum Seekers and Convention Refugees are welcomed, supported and thriving.*

Revised Mission: *ASST supports people who come to NZ seeking asylum, and a safe and peaceful life, by providing critical humanitarian services to those in need. ASST advocates for legally compliant and compassionate treatment of our clients and all who seek asylum.*

Revised Values: *Respect; Inclusion; Empathy; Integrity; Impact.*

Critical Issues:

- Increasing our sustainability
- Optimising our service deliver
- Increasing engagement towards our cause
- Positively influencing government policy towards asylum seekers and convention refugees.

Revised Strategic Goals:

- Ensure ASST have a minimum of 3-year sustainability as a platform for organizational growth
- Augment the quality of service provided to asylum seekers and convention refugees in NZ
- Increase empathy and support for asylum seekers and convention refugees in New Zealand
- Build effective relationships with all levels of Government to advance the cause of asylum seekers and convention refugees in NZ

Treasurer, Tracy Hickman closed the AGM at 8:00pm