

**2019 Annual General Meeting of the  
Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group**

**Minutes**

Date	Saturday 12 October	Time 3 pm to 5 pm	Woodend Neighbourhood House
Chairperson	Dr David Gormley-O'Brien		
Attendees	Kathryn Allen, Sue Barker, Jon Bartlett, Michael Berechree, Robert Bruhn, Geoff Cummings, Ben Cummings, Bradley Dean, Anita Foerester, David Gormley-O'Brien, Sara Gormley-O'Brien, Nea Gyorffy, Christina Hill, Lyn Hovey, Jayne Howley, Isabella Lane, Peter Lane, Christine MacIntosh, Karen Martin, Nicole Middleton, Bruce Mildenhall, Anthony Montague, Geoffrey Murray, Lucy Patterson, Cr Janet Pearce, Pene Rice, Lisa Richards, Claire Rowland, Ron Sims, Bridgid Soames, Ralf Thesing, Cathy Thesing, Marg Thornell, Jamie Williamson		
Apologies	Cr Jenifer Anderson, Anne Brauman-Lane, Lucy Campbell, Lulu Cockram, Bec Colless, Lisa Chesters, Lindsay Cummings, Anna Haines, Jenny Holliday, David Haines, Ruth Hodgson, Patrick Hodgson, Barry Mann, David Nelson, Al Reid, Ian Rennie, Helen Scott, Ian Scott, Mary-Anne Thomas, Robert Were, Doris Were		

1	David Gormley-O'Brien opened the AGM and welcomed everyone to the meeting
2	Acceptance of Minutes of the 2018 AGM  MOVED: Sue Barker    SECONDED: Peter Lane    CARRIED
3	<p><u>Reports</u></p> <p><u>President's Report</u></p> <p>In the past twelve months, the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group (MRSG) has made significant progress in three key areas: action groups and committee restructure, communications, and partnerships.</p> <p>The object of the new Committee of Governance is to empower the action groups to operate in an autonomous way, in line with MRSG's vision and objectives. Freed from the burden of governance, insurance, web-hosting, registration etc, the action groups can focus on embodying the social change it seeks with the events and activities in its field. The action group leaders meet together every two months to share ideas and experiences and to participate in key policies in conjunction with the Committee of Governance.</p> <p>This transformation was very evident in the 2019 Sustainable Living Festival which not only provided an arena for local businesses and non-profit organisations to exhibit their sustainable living products and activities, but also gave equal billing to MRSG's action groups, which showcased to the general public their passion, work, and activities.</p>

The formation of three new action groups (Sustainable Malmsbury, Sustainable Transport and Youth) is particularly exciting

The second area of progress was in the field of communications. For the past year MRSG has developed a very attractive website at [mrsg.org.au](http://mrsg.org.au) which functions as the central locus for all information about MRSG including the events and news of its action groups. In addition, newsletters are emailed out regularly, and many action groups have their own social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. With this plethora of communicative means our members are kept up to date with news and events.

The third area of progress and one that brings immense satisfaction is the way that MRSG has fostered close partnerships with Woodend Neighbourhood House and other Community Houses in the region, the Library, and the Macedon Ranges Shire Council. All these organisations have a key interest in sustainability and building community. Our vision can only come to fruition if we work closely with each other. One example from Sustainable House Day (SHD) held on September 15th suffices to illustrate this. The SHD event was organised by the Sustainable Homes action group, which was supported by the Farmers' Markets action group in providing the marquees at each location, and the M.R.V.E.G action group which was responsible for providing the delicious lunch in the Woodend Neighbourhood House for the visitors who travelled to several homes in a bus provided by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

In conclusion, MRSG is in very good shape structurally, financially, and in terms of its morale. Membership numbers continue to climb at a staggering rate (Sept 2019: 401; Sept 2018: 298; Sept 2017: 231). In the last year there was an increase of 34%. The good shape of the organisation can largely be attributed to the passion, commitment, and professionalism of each of the committee members, action group leaders, and the members at large who all share a sense of common purpose.

Dr David Gormley-O'Brien, MRSG President

#### Treasurer's Report

MRSG's finances continue to be in a very sound position. The financial position has hardly moved over the last financial year with an overall surplus of \$163.

Asset depreciation on the books of \$6,000 was more than offset by other surpluses. We were able to secure grants for the Sustainable Living Festival, a microscope for the Bee Friendly Society, and the new Waste Action Group totalling \$9,260. Compared to the prior year C3 and MASH income fell away and we are yet to invoice for the Mill electricity use, hence commission earnings reduced by \$9,000. Income from events like bee courses and vegetarian catering has been strong with \$9,500. The Farmers Market group were instrumental in setting up a second market in Macedon and continue to be a steady financial contributor to the overall group. After many profitable years the 2019 Macedon Ranges Sustainable Living Festival (SLF) made a substantial loss of -\$5,000 in 2018. Most importantly memberships have increased substantially reflected in a 50% increase in membership fees.

With 12 action groups (15 by the time of writing) both income and expenditure are widely diversified and the overall organisation is therefore in a very robust

	<p>and healthy financial position. The impact of a temporary deficit in one of the action groups can easily be absorbed by other groups.</p> <p>Ralf Thesing, MRSG Treasurer</p>
4	<p>A proposal to change MRSG's constitution, as follows, was put to the meeting:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Add to the purpose of the Association (ie MRSG) to "invest in renewable energy projects and use revenues from these for other sustainable projects"</p> <p>A motion to change the constitution was unanimously passed.</p> <p>MOVED: Robert Bruhn    SECONDED: Ben Cummings    CARRIED</p>
5	<p><u>New Committee nominations</u></p> <p>Nominations for the 2019 Committee were received from David Gormley-O'Brien, Kellie Flanagan, Anna Haines, Christina Hill, Peter Lane, Bruce Mildenhall, Geoffrey Murray and Ralf Thesing. The nominations were accepted by members.</p> <p>Robert Bruhn was acknowledged and for his enormous contribution to the 2018 Committee.</p>
6	<p><u>Guest speaker</u></p> <p>We were lucky to have Cr Janet Pearce, Mayor of Macedon Ranges Shire Council, join us to speak about the work the Shire is doing to promote sustainability. Janet spoke about efforts related to climate change and energy, waste, land and waterways management, and biodiversity. The question and answer session that followed focussed on climate change and energy issues.</p>
	<p><u>Action Groups Report</u></p> <p>Robert Bruhn gave a presentation highlighting the many activities and successes of all the Action Groups over the past year. Robert noted the formation of three new Action Groups – for Sustainable Malmsbry, Sustainable Transport and Youth.</p>