



2019 AGM Minutes
14th November 2019 at 7:00pm
Junction 142, 142 Katoomba St, Katoomba 2780

DIRECTORS PRESENT	Narelle Wilson, Kathryn Taylor, Rachel Hall, Georgia Page, Chris Dubrow, Helen Gillam
ABSENT	
APOLOGIES	Sonya Byron (Director)
STAFF ATTENDEES	Halin Nieuwenhuysse, Amy Tyson, Jacqueline Forster, Rebecca Tyson, Alison Garland, Lesley Sammon
OTHER SPECIAL ATTENDEES	Louise O'Halloran (nominee), David King (welcome)
MEMBER ATTENDEES	Ian Dudley-Bestow, Kay Ridgeway, Murray Hopkins
TOTAL MEMBERS ATTENDED	
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS	Belle Smith, Colin Gladys
MEMBER DECLARATION CARDS GIVEN OUT UPON SIGN IN	17

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2019 AGM Minutes

14th November 2019 at 7:00pm
Junction 142, 142 Katoomba St, Katoomba 2780

1) Welcome to Country

Thank you David King

2) Value Statement

Thank you Georgia Page

'The Blue Mountains Food Co-op is a member-owned not for profit organisation. We value community, respect the environment and promote equality and social responsibility.

We seek to provide an accessible and welcoming shopping environment, and share information to help members and the broader community make informed choices about what they eat and how they live.'

3) Discuss AGM purpose and format

Georgia summarised the ordinary business of the AGM and advised members that we can provide information about how to raise a motion or requisition a meeting with the Co-op

4) Introduction of current Directors

Thank you Georgia Page

5) Approval of November 2018 AGM Minutes

(Minutes circulated to room)

Motion that the 2018 AGM minutes be accepted

Moved by Rachel Hall

Seconded by Murray Hopkins

6) Summary of Chair's annual report

Motion that the chair's report be accepted

Moved by Ian Dudley Bestow

Seconded by Narelle Wilson

7) Present life membership to Georgia

Thank you Halin

8) Summary of Treasurer's annual report

Cautioned that the coming 2 years are a tough financial forecast. Wished the Co-op well in navigating that as a retailer.

Motion that the Treasurer's report be accepted

Moved by Kathryn Taylor



2019 AGM Minutes
14th November 2019 at 7:00pm
Junction 142, 142 Katoomba St, Katoomba 2780

Seconded by Lou O'Halloran

9) Summary of Manager's annual report

Motion that the Manager's report be accepted

Moved by Murray Hopkins

Seconded by Chris Dubrow

10) Review donations report and advise official donations budget for 2018-2019 financial year

\$2377.90 (10% OF PROFIT FROM 2018-2019 FY)

Motion to accept the donations report and confirm the amount allocated to donations for the 2019-2020 financial year.

Moved by Helen Gillam

Seconded by David King

11) Resignation of Board Directors

Rachel Hall

Helen Gillam

Helen read a letter of resignation. She expressed that her resignation came a result of the board's decision to sell meat. She feels it took the 'ethical gloss' from the organisation and that it would be dishonest of her to continue in her position on the board when she is in total opposition to the policy.

Sonya Byron (renominate)

Thank you so much Rachel and Helen. Gifts presented.

12) Introduction of the nominees for vacant Board positions for 2019

Louise O'Halloran

Sonya Byron

Declarations counted by returning officer (Amy)

Results:

Louise 17

Sonya 17

13) Appointment of Directors of the Board

Thank you Georgia



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Welcome and congratulations to Louise and Sonya

14) Announce and discuss the members meat survey results

Georgia announced the result of the members meat survey as 72% YES (in favour of the co-op selling meat) and 28% NO. The comments provided by members were considered alongside the numerical votes. She discussed the complexity of the process for the board coming to this decision and advised that the board is yet to write a policy on meat supply into the Co-op's strategic plan. This will involve the Co-op prioritising sourcing meat grown on regenerative farms.

(Georgia read prepared paper – appendix I)

15) Suggestions and questions put forward by members

- I. Belle Smith (Household member) asked how many people signed the petition on change.org against the Co-op selling meat. Amy Tyson (staff/member) offered that it was a few thousand and that the signees were internationally based. The data was unable to be cross referenced with the Co-op's database of members due to the format in which it was available.
- II. Belle Smith asked if people who maybe could not afford a membership (Wednesday shoppers) were offered a vote.
- III. Ian Dudley Bestow (member) - Profit went down the same amount that costs of payroll went up. Queried that the board has been distracted by the meat issue and perhaps dropped the ball on watching the financial situation. Halin Nieuwenhuys (manager) addressed this suggesting it was not linked as the roster trial was discussed and implemented before the meat issue was raised. Narelle Wilson (director) offered that the financials were being closely reviewed monthly as per normal. Helen Gillam (resigned director [treasurer]/member) offered that the meat issue had consumed the board and it is a good thing that that decision is over.
- IV. David King (member) asked if we are applying the same approach that we applying to buying meat to the rest of the products in the co-op? Are all of those products regenerative also? Everything we take out of the land has an impact. Anything not native presents a problem. Narelle Wilson (director) replied that the criteria for suppliers (including meat suppliers) will be in the strategic plan.
- V. Rebecca Tyson (staff/member) Thanks to the board for making the decision so that the co-op can move forward.
- VI. Murray Hopkins (member) appreciates the complexity and appreciates that the board modelled reviewing that complexity with care.
- VII. Kaye Ridgeway (member) with the drought is there less produce coming in from local growers? Halin Nieuwenhuys (manager) answered not really. Perhaps grain shortages soon. Narelle Wilson (director) said pineapple, strawberry and macadamia farms have been effected by bushfire.
- VIII. Lesley Sammon (staff/member) In Australia the soil is designed for its native animals. Hard hoofed animals may not necessarily be regenerative of the native soil. Feral animals could be considered for culling and eating. Narelle Wilson (director) knew of a farming area where feral animal (like goats) are culled and could be used for eating.
- IX. Kaye Ridgeway (member) concerned about packaging effecting the meat and also the disposable nature of the packaging.



2019 AGM Minutes
14th November 2019 at 7:00pm
Junction 142, 142 Katoomba St, Katoomba 2780

X. David King (member) concerned about wastage if meat doesn't sell.

16) Thank you and close

Meeting closed at 8:30pm

DRAFT



2019 AGM Minutes

14th November 2019 at 7:00pm
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Appendix 1

MEAT AT THE CO-OP

For the last 20 years members have been asking the Co-op to sell meat and the question has never been resolved.

The board initially decided to look at this question in response to a consistent line of questioning coming from our membership about when/if we will sell meat. Like the question about whether or when we might move, it's been a frequently recurring query.

Single most complex decision that the board has had to navigate in the 10 years I have been a director.

The decision-making process has taken a significant amount of time because of the board's desire to address this question methodically, to consult with members and come to a grounded decision.

The survey result was 72% in favour and 28% against the Co-op selling meat. The comments many members provided were all collated and considered alongside the numerical vote. We will make the survey results, including anonymous comments, available on the website from tomorrow.

SHOW TABLES SHOWING COLLATION OF COMMENTS/CONCERNS

Following the membership survey, the board met to discuss the results and come to a conclusion prior to the AGM.

Although the membership survey returned a significant majority in favour of the Co-op selling meat, directors were still torn about how to finalise this decision with the biggest concern in making the decision to go ahead with selling meat for most (not all) directors was environmental impact of meat production.

After much discussion, in which we each shared our personal point of view, one of our directors questioned whether we would still be debating the issue if the survey had returned the opposite result and a substantial majority for the no vote. And we would not.

To proceed, we articulated the criteria we were using to make the decision, identified the stakeholders in the decision, and reiterated our responsibilities as directors of a member's co-op.

Voting as an individual and director does require that we apply a slightly different set of criteria. As a director of a member's co-op, it is our responsibility that we endeavour to best represent our members and act in the best interests of the Co-op and our stakeholders – our members, the co-operative business, and the environment.



2019 AGM Minutes

14th November 2019 at 7:00pm
Junction 142, 142 Katoomba St, Katoomba 2780

The board's decision was not unanimous but was carried with a majority that we are comfortable proceeding with. It may be of interest to members that the split of the board vote was similar to that of the membership, and that the yes/no vote was not split clearly among those directors who do and don't choose to eat meat. It truly was a complex question for each of us to wrestle with.

In light of the members' vote, the board has decided that the Co-op will sell meat but only meat that has been raised using regenerative farming practices. We would like to support small scale farmers who demonstrate a commitment to building soil biodiversity, water holding capacity and sequestering carbon.

We are confident that meat grown using regenerative practices is the best way to meet our members' needs and satisfy our responsibility for the impact of our behaviour on the environment.

Biodynamic farming is by its very nature regenerative farming but not all organic farming is necessarily regenerative. In this situation, we will prioritise regenerative farming practises over organic certification.

Whilst we support the move towards eating less meat and eating a more plant rich diet, we also recognise (as our members have demonstrated through their votes) that people are going to continue to eat meat for a variety of reasons. And we'd like to be able to offer a more responsibly sourced product than is currently available in local supermarkets and butchers. The when and how of this are yet to be determined but given the drought in NSW, it is not necessarily something that will be happening in the short term.