

Proportional Representation Society of Australia Inc.



+61429176725
ABN 31 010 090 247
A0048538N Victoria

info@prsa.org.au
www.prsa.org.au
20th November 2024

Minutes of the 79th Annual General Meeting, held online at <https://meet.google.com/kud-tvnw-ckt>, 7:30 pm, Australian Eastern Daylight Saving Time, Wednesday 20th November 2024

1. Attendance and Apologies

Present: Dr Jeremy Lawrence, Geoffrey Goode OAM, Travis Jordan, Philip Lillingston, Bruce Errol, John Photakis, Ian Downes, Geoff Powell, Malcolm Baalman, Yingtong Li, Ben Raue, Catherine Garner, and Dr Stephen Morey (Secretary) [thirteen members]

Apology: Jonathan Melland

2. Confirmation of [Minutes of the 78th Annual General Meeting of the former Proportional Representation Society of Australia \(Victoria-Tasmania\) Inc, on 22 November 2023](#)

Motion: That the minutes of the 78th Annual General Meeting be confirmed.

Moved: Geoffrey Goode Seconded: Philip Lillingston, Carried unanimously. (2411A)

3. Welcome to any new members attending

Travis Jordan and Ian Downes are new members in the last year.

4. Report by the PRSA Inc. President and discussion on it

The President, Dr. Jeremy Lawrence, reported about the winding up of the previous national body, and the change of the previous Victoria-Tasmania Branch into a national organisation, Proportional Representation Society of Australia Inc. After holding a postal ballot, the assets of the old national organisation were transferred to the new PRSA Inc. The President also reported on other activities of the Society during 2023-24.

Motion that the President's report be accepted. Moved: Jeremy Lawrence, Seconded: Bruce Errol, Carried unanimously. (2411B)

5. Report by the PRSA Inc. Treasurer and discussion on it

Motion that the Treasurer's Report be received. Moved: Bruce Errol, Seconded: Geoffrey Goode, Carried unanimously. (2111C)

6. Declaration of the result of the election by postal ballot of the PRSA Inc. Council for 2024-26

The Returning Officer, Ms Donna De Palma, emailed the Management Committee to inform it that nominations for the five vacancies were received from five candidates only; Jeremy Lawrence, Geoffrey Goode, Stephen Morey, Travis Jordan, and Bruce Errol, so she therefore declared those five candidates elected unopposed.

7. Guest Speaker, Mr Travis Jordan, on the topic of 'Campaigning for Electoral Reform in the 21st Century'

Travis Jordan is an experienced board governance adviser, leading public sector and civil society boards through renewal, expansion and strategic reorientations. Bringing a unique set of professional experience, from strategic communications professional to media manager, lawyer to national campaign manager for several winning campaigns, Travis is uniquely well placed to support campaign organisations to streamline their operations, modernise their campaign infrastructure, and to set themselves on a winning trajectory. Travis has worked with the Victorian Government, Australian

Greens, Humdinger and SOS Entertainment, Cooperative Power, Digital Rights Watch and Freeplay - and many more - to help them with business operations. Not-for-profits have unique challenges that the private sector doesn't face - and campaign vehicles even more so.

Stephen Morey, Secretary

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Summary of the talk

Travis presented the challenges that we face

- Only 43 members, mostly male, older, highly educated and not very representative of the whole population
- Two most recent substantial developments, 1989 introduction of PR-STV into the ACT, 2006 - PR for the Victorian Legislative Council with a form of STV

Travis gave a brief introduction about 'democracy organisations' and pointed out that groups like new-Democracy and Australian Democracy Network' are not much interested in electoral systems. Travis pointed out that there are no other organisations that are both 'grassroots organising' and interested in electoral reform.

Internationally, Travis pointed out 6 or 7 international organisations, such as the Electoral Reform Society in the UK (with its £20 million budget).

The common features of the various international organisations are dealing with present day issues, building momentum to the final goals.

'Being right doesn't win' – people don't believe that PR will bring benefits for them.

Questions

- Are you a forum for hobbyists (to debate mathematical minutiae) – or are you looking to effect change?
- Are we the right body to do this work?
- There are a lot more people that care about democracy and PR who are not joining us.
- Hence, what is our purpose?
- For places where PR-STV isn't (currently) viable what is it that we should try to achieve?
- Currently the main issue being discussed federally is the question of electoral funding and truth in advertising.
- The issues of membership, what is stopping people joining us?
- How will we win the changes that we want?
- Do we have a strategy for the next five years, for example?

The issues

Participation, who gets to vote and how
 Administration, voter identification, campaign finance, lobbying
 Innovation, electronic voting, term lengths, privacy rights, devolution
 Representation, do we have enough politicians, staffing, conscience votes

PR gets mentioned, but tends to be mentioned in context of other issues. Experts in the specifics – but campaigners in general.

Travis proposed short term goals and medium term goals. The more time we talk about process, the less time we would be doing it.

A role of the Society is trusted expertise, which is important to retain.

The Chair concluded the meeting at 9:10 pm.