



## Responses to Questions Raised at ALARA 2017 AGM

During the ALARA 2017 AGM, members raised some questions in the relevant section of the voting form. The following are responses to those questions.

### Access to Documents

One member commented on difficulty in accessing the relevant documents. The Management Committee (MC) will try to discuss the problem with the member concerned. If any members are experiencing difficulty with the website, we encourage them to contact Robyn at [secretary@alarassociation.org](mailto:secretary@alarassociation.org) so that we can improve the service on that site.

### Face-to-face Vs Virtual Vs Electronic Survey for Annual General Meeting

One member commented about the difficulty in discussing the matters raised at the AGM through the electronic survey (while another member complimented the MC on the survey approach).

The MC had hoped to hold a virtual AGM this year, via its account in Zoom (similar to Skype). To conduct such a meeting, the MC had to be confident that at least 8-10 members would be at a location (to ensure that the meeting met the quorum requirement for the AGM). Our attempt to gain certainty about that number being present was unsuccessful and we reverted to holding the meeting via Survey Monkey. The MC will attempt again next year to hold a virtual AGM, but the quorum issue will be important in deciding whether that form of meeting proceeds.

The member also raised the question of having a face-to-face meeting. The lack of anyone volunteering to organise an event / conference within the period required for an AGM during the last three years has prevented the MC calling a physical meeting for the AGM. Please also see further below.

### Financial Performance

Two members questioned the serious loss experienced by ALARA in the last financial year. Specifically, questions asked were:

1. What is the Liability Listed in the Balance Sheet as Congress Sth Af Provision (2016 & 2017)?
  2. For consistency and comparison year to year, I think the Loss from the 2016 conference should be shown in the P&L analysis against Conference income
  3. A technicality - the balance sheet history is actually P&L?
  4. There was no discussion re the budget for the next year and projection for the coming year.
  5. I was expecting some reflection and honest discussion of what led to the 2016 loss and how something similar will be prevented in the future
  6. The deficits in the Association's accounts are alarming. What steps are being taken to address this?
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1. The "Congress Sth Af provision" is a consequence of the agreement made between ALARA and organisers of the South African World Congress. ALARA splits any profit or loss at an event with its co-host. The organiser of the World Congress indicated that the university would swallow up any profit from the event, and the AL/AR practitioners of South Africa would therefore lose that profit. The MC agreed to hold the organiser's share of the profit in trust as seed funding for future AL/AR events in Africa. The amount is effectively a liability, even though it is seed funding (organisers would have to repay the funds). Details of the seed funding are on the ALARA site - <https://alarassociation.org/projects/alara-african-events>.

2. The loss on the 2016 Conference could have been presented as a negative figure under income. While the MC hopes it does not experience another loss at a conference, we note this suggestion.
3. The Balance Sheet history (page 21 of the Report) is a profit and loss history. The MC will make the adjustment for future Reports.
4. The statement and questions about the loss for 2016, no discussion on budget and projections and the steps to be taken to prevent recurrence of last year's loss (questions 4, 5 and 6) focus on the main challenge facing the MC: ALARA does not have sufficient income to pay for its costs.

The 2016 expenses included three extraordinary items:

- Conference loss – an unfortunate outcome, due to poor attendance numbers, which directly influenced the decision not to proceed with a 2017 conference unless a profit could be guaranteed;
- Web design – a continuation of the building of the new ALARA website commenced the previous year. The MC had allocated much of ALARA's share of the profit from the South African World Congress to pay for the build;
- Sponsorship of the ARNA conference in Cartagena in June 2017, which the MC decided to pay to encourage interaction and communication between the various global AR networks

If you remove these three extraordinary expenditure items (which total \$14,427), the remaining costs represent ALARA's usual operating costs (about \$15,600). These costs far exceed ALARA's usual income from membership, etc. In most of the last seven years, ALARA has made up the difference (and exceeded that difference) through successful conferences / congresses. The loss from the 2016 event was not just a loss of \$7,721, but also an additional loss of a few thousand dollars profit that ALARA has come to rely upon to offset its usual operating costs.

The lack of a profit from a conference will reoccur this financial year, as ALARA is not holding a conference. A rough estimate for the current year will show a loss of \$5-6,000, because the non-conference income does not cover ALARA's operating costs.

The MC has been attempting to identify new sources of income, such as the new chapter with Norwich University (effectively new members) and an arrangement with GCWAL on a course (which is unlikely to produce much income this financial year).

The MC encourages members to:

- Help enlist new members
- Suggest ways to attract new members
- Propose new ways to source funds
- Offer to conduct events that will generate income
- Donate their time, money and resources

Any suggestions or offers can be made to Colin Bradley ([president@alarassociation.org](mailto:president@alarassociation.org)) or Robyn at [secretary@alarassociation.org](mailto:secretary@alarassociation.org).

### **Changes to Constitution**

A member questioned the changes to the Constitution (and presumably, others who voted against the changes agreed with the question). The member could not see the need to extend the term of appointment without an election, implying the MC members wanted to protect their appointment on the MC.

The explanatory document about the changes to the Constitution stated that the resignation of all members of the MC at each AGM “could cause problems with continuity, particularly transference of knowledge.”

The intent of the change to the relevant sections of the Constitution was not to shore up the tenure of the MC members, but rather safeguard against a disruption to the management of ALARA caused by the departure of several MC members at one time. The MC was concerned that two-year terms may deter volunteers from nominating, but decided to proceed with the extended terms to reducing the organisational risk of multiple departures.

This staggered approach to the term of the MC members is standard practice in many organisations for the same reason – minimising the risk of much corporate knowledge and experience leaving the organisation at the one time.

### **Management Committee Membership**

Finally, there was a comment about the MC coping with only four members (there are now five). The MC does not need to be large, but it does need people assisting it to achieve ALARA’s necessary and desired outcomes. We would welcome anyone willing to offer one hour a week, or a day a month, to progress a specific project. Membership of the MC is not a requirement for such assistance. As mentioned, please make any suggestions or offers to Colin or Robyn.

Thank you to the members who participated in the AGM and who raised the matters discussed above. We hope the above information clarifies any concerns. Clearly, there is much for the MC and members to do to eliminate those concerns.

If you have any questions please contact a member of the Management Committee:  
<https://alarassociation.org/?q=about-us/governance/alara-management-committee>.

Colin Bradley  
on behalf of the ALARA Management Committee  
2 October 2017