

# RPSBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 8 June, 2019

Venue: Tradewinds hotel, 1 Sewell Street, East Fremantle WA 6158



## MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Michael Smith, Robert Cockram, Alyson Emery, Eileen Morris, Helen Moore, Ashley Cooper, Janice Keelan, Helen Duffy, Julie Sabine, Jessica Campbell, Judy Sabine, Robyn Vale, Debra Watson, Helen Dohan

The Chairman, Michael Smith, declared the meeting open at 4.02 pm, welcomed the members present and called for Apologies.

**APOLOGIES:** Tania Hay, Jacqui Langfield, Annie Coxon, Andrew Hunt, Dalveen Gregory, Janell Karmelich, Rosie Metherall, Paul Morath, Sandra Donovan, Amanda Gilberd, Monique Bray, Eliza Bertola, Carys Reside, Brittany Reside, Anna Duffy.

### MINUTES OF THE 2018 AGM MEETING

The minutes had been circulated and members were given an opportunity to review them.

**MOTION:** That the minutes of the AGM held 16 June 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

Moved: Helen Moore Seconded: Robert Cockram Carried

### CHAIR REPORT

Michael Smith presented the Chair Report

It is my honour to present the Riding Pony Stud Book Society Ltd. Board of Directors' Chair Report for 2018 – 19.

In Memoriam: Let us pause for moment to remember Riding Pony members that passed away in 2018-2019: Past RPSBS Board Chair Sally George (Qld); Robyn Barry (Vic); Sue Billing and Graham Fricker (SA); Shelley Benthien (WA)  
The RPSBS Board saw one resignation by a Director this past year. Renee Dorney, Director elected by NSW, resigned at the time of the New South Wales 2018 State Annual Meeting.

With RPSBS NSW committee having fewer than 3 elected members after their State Annual Meeting, the NSW committee was put into Administration until a Special Meeting of NSW members could be called for the purpose of electing a new committee. On July 17, 2018 a Special Meeting of NSW members was held at the Richmond Golf Club at which a new committee was formed. At the election of office bearers meeting held after the special meeting, Mr Ashley Cooper was elected as the NSW Director.

Three Directors, Eileen Morris (WA), Alyson Emery (SA) and myself (QLD) were re-elected for another three year term at the relevant 2019 State Annual Meetings.

Mrs Deb Watson, a Bookkeeper and previous Company Treasurer for the Arabian Horse Society has taken over the role of Company Treasurer with Mrs Christine Gibbons retaining her role as Company Secretary.

The contract with the Arabian Horse Society to provide our registry and secretariat services was renewed in October 2018. The RPSBS Board thanks Helen Dohan and her office staff for their exemplary services to our Society and we appreciate the ongoing support of the Arabian Horse Society Board.

A contract was also awarded to Show Pony Graphics, with principal Despina Mitrakis, for the provision of Publicity and Marketing Services to the Society. Despina has been providing the Production Services for our Riding Pony annual and has been responsible for the design and maintenance of the RPSBS national and state web sites. In her expanded role she has taken on the role of editor of the RPSBS annual, the Leader Board initiative, the monthly Information Bulletins and all aspects of the Society's publicity and marketing.

At the 2018 Annual General Meeting in Adelaide the Board of Directors gave a commitment to:

1. Continued sound governance including a review all RPSBS Policies and Procedures. The Board has completed the review with the following outcomes:
  - The Judges' Policy has had some changes to processing procedures and a change of name to Judges' Policy and Procedures as it now includes a Judges' Contract templar, a Code of Conduct and a RPSBS Guidelines for Judges. National level judges are now only required to attend a RPSBS Judges' seminar once in a 5 year period.;

- The State Committee Structures and Procedures document was modified in an attempt to make the Committee election process simpler for members with all nominations for election now being handled by the National Office and all deadlines standardised across all states;
- The Working Hunter fence heights have had the minimum height of fences removed and now equates to those of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society;
- Following extensive research into the policies of other breed societies and member feedback, a comprehensive RPSBS Policies and Procedures Manual has been produced combining our existing policies and new additions into the one manual. Topics include Responsibilities of members, officials, etc, Code of Conduct, Heat and Social Media Policies, Protection of Children, Videoing and Photographing of events, Animal Welfare, Drug Testing, Online security and Complaints. As with any new policies, a draft of the document was posted on the web site for members comment and advertised through the monthly Information Bulletin before being adopted;
- The Constitution of the Society was also on the agenda for review in 2018. The legal advice received was that the Constitution was sound and appropriate to a Limited Liability Company such as ours. An audit of our policies was conducted and only one significant change had to be made to quorum required for State Annual Meetings in the State Governance and Procedures document to remove a conflict with the RPSBS Ltd. constitution.

## 2. The Board of Directors committed to providing effective, ongoing communication with members.

- The Policies and Procedures that have been reviewed have all included a period of consultation during which member feedback and suggestions were invited. The comments and suggestions were reviewed by the Board before final decisions were made.
- The member feedback sheet is there on the web site to be used by members at any time.
- Redacted minutes of all Board meetings are published on the RPSBS web site once they have had Board approval.
- The monthly Information Bulletins provide the Board and the State Publicity Officers the opportunity to keep all members fully informed of all National and State RPSBS initiatives and news and are available on the web site.
- Interested persons who are currently not financial members of the Society are able to register online as an interested party and receive copies of the monthly Newsletters.
- The web site also has a library of all past RPSBS newsletters and annuals. I strongly recommend this site to you all.

## 3. Addressing declining membership.

New initiatives this year include:

- As previously mentioned a monthly information bulletin is now circulated to all members made possible by the contract with Show Pony Graphics;
- A Youth Clinic Subsidy of \$500 per year is available, on application, to assist with the cost of conducting a Youth Clinic. Payment to be made upon application to the Board and payable after the event upon receipt of a report on the event.;
- Full page back cover advertisement in the SHCA Grand National catalogue;
- The Leader Board competition has been a massive undertaking by Despina Mitrakis. The technology that enables members to update their showing results by phone whilst still at the show has made it very easy for the competitors. Despina's ability to attract sponsors to this project has resulted in RPSBS being able to provide impressive Reality Bronze trophies to the winners in addition to the \$ 3,000 in prize money being gifted by the Society.

A very special thank you to all the wonderful sponsors of this competition.

## 4. Relevance of RPSBS Ltd. I will address this issue in my closing remarks.

RPSBS Annual: As mentioned earlier, Despina Mitrakis is the editor of the 2019 Riding Pony Annual and one of her initiatives was to undertake a survey of members as to what they wanted in their annual. As expected some members wanted all photos and results, some a mixture of photos and articles, and others wanted the annual be a source of reference material. Hopefully the annual will provide something for all our members.

Members are now able to lodge their own photos and information on their animal's successes via the web site as they receive them. State Publicity Officers are in regular communication with Despina providing photos and results of shows as they happen. It is hoped that this will have saved the large amount of time that has been spent chancing photos and results as the annual deadline approached.

State Committees: A very special thank you must go to all the State Riding Pony committee members. I cannot over estimate the importance of RPSBS maintaining a presence in every state. In many cases it's just a couple of members' determination ensuring their committees survive. The Board is acutely aware that, as the number of breeders and

enthusiasts decline, it has become increasingly difficult for our committees in the smaller states. The Board is providing support in many ways. By co-ordinating BAS and audits nationally we now provide increased support for state treasurers with no cost to the states in relation to Business Activity Statements and have significantly reduced the audit costs of \$100 or \$150 depending on the size of the state. States no longer have to design, support and pay for their web sites. Smaller states receive higher rates of member rebates, and the Board is committed to maintaining the current level of rebate. States have had funds made available for shows, young stock initiatives and, now, youth clinics. In the case of the NSW committee having to be placed in administration for a short period of time all costs associated with reforming the NSW committee were borne by the National Board.

I would be most remiss if I failed to specially thank the members of the WA Riding Pony committee, especially Eileen Morris and Helen Moore, for hosting the Riding Pony 2019 Annual General Meeting. What a beautiful venue. Thank you ladies. This is the first Riding Pony AGM to be held in Western Australia and reflects the Board's commitment to being a truly national society.

**Finances:** RPSBS has not escaped the effects of the drought and many other factors which have also affected ours and other Breed Societies. In the last financial year, Membership income was down by 9% however registration income only dropped by 3.3%. With the significant decrease in expenditure that has been achieved over the past 3 years and in spite of the continued downturn in revenue the Board felt it necessary to invest funds to raise the profile of RPSBS Ltd. and to provide more incentives for members and breeders. The board believes that it must be proactive and that the money invested this year in providing increased professional support services and sponsorships is essential for the future of our Society. It is a challenge to maintain a budget surplus but provide as many benefits as possible to our members. The Company Treasurer will provide a comprehensive breakdown of our finances in the audit figures.

**Fees:** No membership or registration fees have been raised. A number of our fees have either been reduced or abolished over the last 2 years. This year the fee for registering an approved stallion has dropped from \$150 to \$75. The fee for changing registration details has been dropped from \$35 to \$10.

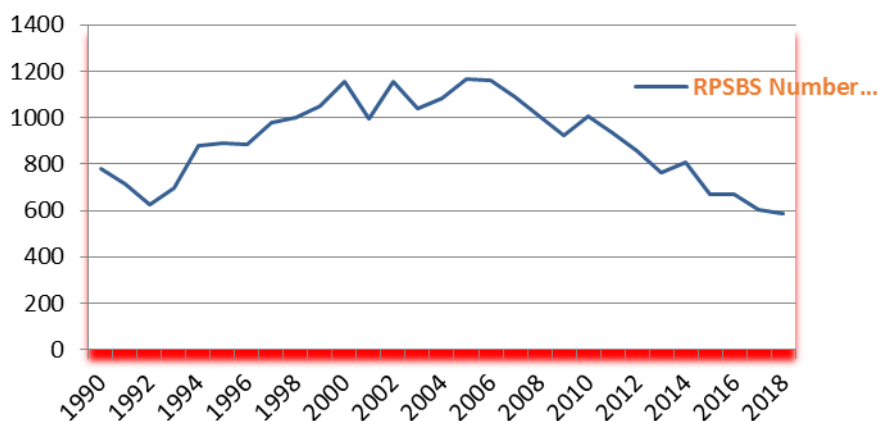
RPSBS Membership data:

STATE	2016	2017	2018	2019
NSW/ACT	494	568	524	478
QLD	249	254	250	251
SA	125	133	146	126
TAS	48	68	58	45
VIC	464	492	498	431
WA	167	165	142	135
OTHER				7
TOTALS	1547	1680	1618	1474

RPSBS Registration/Transfer data (July- May):

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
Registrations	670	671	602	586
Transfers	763	796	631	585

### RPSBS Number registered



This graph clearly demonstrates the general problem being faced by our Society. Annie Coxon's 2010 Chair Report highlighted concerns over the falling registrations. There are many factors, such as the Equine Influenza epidemic, Hendra Virus and prolonged drought, beyond our control that have led to the decline in leisure horse breeding. Our task

is to keep as many of our animals that are bred registered in our stud book and their owners, financial members in addition to providing encouragement and incentives for our members to breed ponies. There are so many Riding Ponies competing successfully in the open show ring whose owners are not financial and ponies that have not been transferred. One interesting statistic to help put our falling registrations into perspective. Over the last 4 years Riding Pony registrations have fallen 12.5%, Show Horse Council Australasia's registrations have fallen 30%.

The failure to have ponies registered as youngsters has led to a problem that is increasing. The Society has many applications from competitors that have acquired a Riding Pony and want to register it. In many cases hours are wasted and the animal cannot be traced or verified resulting in disappointed owners and another Riding Pony that fails to make it into the stud book. There is a Riding Pony competing successfully at Grand Prix level dressage which is not registered. The Society recently had an instance of Riding Ponies attempted to being saved from a dogger pen where their registrations could not be verified as the breeder had died without registering the animals and the family had destroyed all breeding records not realising their importance. As members of the Riding Pony Society we have an obligation to the animals we breed to guarantee them a future and to the maintenance of as complete a Studbook as we can to pass onto the next generation.

Another set of interesting statistics I discovered whilst researching this report is the number of foals being recorded. Interesting for 2 reasons: Firstly, the numbers of foals being registered has been significantly increased with the introduction of the rule requiring registration in the year of birth and secondly, that these figures indicate there are a significant number of Riding Ponies that have not being registered in previous years.

RPSBS Foal Registrations

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
Foals Registered	29	33	51	61

These statistics do highlight that our Society is, and will continue to, operate in challenging and highly competitive conditions. Your Board of Directors is acutely aware of the difficulties being faced by the members of our State Committees. Maintaining relevance in this modern, rapidly changing technological society is a task faced by all Company Directors no matter what the company business. We are looking for new ideas and ways to keep our members and entice those, who have left, to return. AS i have previously mentioned, there is a feedback sheet for members to share their ideas, thoughts, problems etc available on the RPSBS web site. We encourage our members to give us feedback and share their ideas.

**Social Media** unfortunately has become an issue for all organisations. Whilst a firm advocate of members having the right to express their views I would ask members, particularly RPSBS Judges, to ask themselves two questions before they post to social media:

1. Could your actions harm the reputation of the RPSBS Ltd or its employees, Board of Directors, and/or other business related individuals or organisations?
2. Are you behaving with integrity, respect and accountability as expected from all members of RPSBS Ltd?

If a member has an issue with a Rule, Policy or any other matter in relation to RPSBS then I ask them to please use the feedback sheet to inform the Board of the relevant issue. Feedback will always be given.

**Risk factors.** Firstly, the German Riding Pony is in Australia and their numbers are growing. They are having success in the show ring as well as the other equestrian endeavours and they will definitely compete for members. Our task is to adapt to this new reality and to explore initiatives that may be of mutual benefit. Secondly, the risk of a slowing economy and ongoing drought could have a significant effect on our members and thirdly, the lack of support from our members for breed shows and led classes will result in their disappearance. This will remove any hope of our breeders finding a market for their young stock. Having to hold on to animals until they have competed successfully under saddle in the open show ring is an extremely costly and time consuming task that discourages breeders from producing more than one or two foals a year. If only open classes are available for our ponies then the relevance of our Society will be severely challenged.

**Breeders:** We are a Breed Society. Our charter is the promotion of Riding Pony breeding and maintaining a Studbook to record that breeding. This is and always will be the focus of the Board. The introduction of prize vouchers for the breeders of winning animals acknowledges the essential role they play in the success of those animals and breeders have indicated that this small recognition is appreciated. The Queensland Committee has a perpetual award for the Most Successful Breeder at each of their state shows and I'm sure other State Committees have found ways of acknowledging the breeders of successful animals. Last year State Committees each received \$ 1,500 specifically to be spent on initiatives to encourage the breeding and exhibiting of Young Stock.

All members of our Riding Pony Society have a role to play. Our breeders' job is to produce animals that have both quality and temperament; our Judges have to be beyond reproach and judge to our Standard of Excellence; our committees have to be focused on serving their state members to the best of their ability; our directors have to provide the necessary infrastructure to maintain the Studbook together with the leadership and support to breeders, members

and committees; and finally the role of our exhibitors is to showcase our animals not only in the open show ring but in RPSBS classes both led and ridden. This is and always will be our challenge and I'll conclude my report by once again thanking my fellow directors, the office staff, our state committee members and all RPSBS members for your support and dedication to our beautiful Riding Ponies.

Thank you

Mike Smith

Robyn Vale requested that the Board considers the introduction of a German Riding Pony registry under the banner of the RPSBS Ltd. All members present appeared to support this request and requested that the Board review this issue.

## 2. TREASURERS REPORT

The Treasurer, Debra Watson, introduced herself to members.

Copies of the audited accounts to 31 March 2019 have been circulated and posted to the website for consideration by the members at the 2019 AGM.

Due to the benefits of the contract with the Arabian Horse Society office for the previous 2 years, the Board again has negotiated with this Office to continue to maintain the registry and all office matters necessary to the continuance of the professional and timely manner which has been evident for the last 2 years, with just a small increase in line with CPI. National office expenses had reduced exponentially, and the registry and membership work has continued to be processed correctly and in a timelier manner. Board Meetings have also continued to work well on a reduced timeframe with all items being addressed as per the agendas.

This year all income streams were below budget and the previous year, however overall the total downturn was \$14,000 and the expenses for this year overall increased by \$5,000. There would have been a reduction in expenses again however the Board has invested \$10,000 in promotional and marketing expenses to increase the profile of Riding Ponies as a whole, including but not limited to the professional contract of editing and production of the Riding Pony Annual, the initial "Leader Board" promotion, the continual advertising at Grand Nationals and elsewhere has led to a reduction in overall profit for the year, however there is still a profit of \$20,000. With the current bank balance as at 31/3/19 of \$117,277.27 and the further \$180,000 in a term deposit due to mature 8 May 2019, I would like to see a further \$20,000 added to this term deposit to further bolster the Society's passive earning capacity.

The AHSA Registrar, Helen Dohan, and the staff of the Society have continued to be an invaluable part of the continuance of all matters handled in a respectful and timely manner and in a very professional way, the Board thanks her and her staff for their contributions throughout the year.

The Board negotiated a 2 year contract with a bookkeeper to take on the role of Treasurer of the Society in July, 2018 to alleviate the pressure of the workload from Ms Christine Gibbons and lodgement of BAS's since then for the Federal Office and all the states have been lodged online and paid in a timely manner and within the ATO specified timeline.

The Society is in a healthy Net Asset position with enough working capital to meet their financial responsibilities.

The current bank balance is \$287, 742.38 in the large transaction account and a further \$3138.27 in the small working/debit account.

I recommend that the current auditors, Galpins, be reappointed for the coming year.

The Treasurer asked if there were any queries in relation to her report of the Audit report. None were forthcoming.

**MOTION:** That Galpins be re-appointed as Auditors for 2019-20.

**Moved: Debra Watson Secinded: Robyn Vale Carried**

## EDITING

Robert Cockram presented the Editing Report

Editing Sub-Committee Members: Robert Cockram, Tania Hay, Eileen Morris



All things seem to be running smoothly in the Society office with no significant problems anticipated in the foreseeable future.

We thank the office staff for their pleasantries on the phone and in person to members, and the quick turn around of information that has been requested.

There has been a lot of activity outside of the Society of a negative nature towards the registration system and the Society on social media, a number of the people commenting are not even members of the Society and others never register with us in the first instance. It needs to be noted that the registration system has not been significantly altered for a number of years and that subjects now causing concern have been publicised for well over two years.

Members and breeders of the Society are very welcome to politely write to the Board and correspondence will be tabled and responded to, like any Society there is a correct process to go through and the public social media forum is not conducive to informed, meaningful discussions.

One false accusation laid against the Society was that the Board are "money grabbing" but the facts prove otherwise. The Board reviews the Society fees on an annual basis, the Board are forever mindful that it is our responsibility to produce an accurate Stud Book and remain financially viable into the future while maintaining fees for members wherever possible. The Board has also been in a position to reduce some fees for members.

- DNA is no longer required for Geldings conceived by chilled semen (AI), a saving of around \$100 for members;
- The DNA fee has been reduced to \$70
- No DNA is required for any foal when AI is done in house on the stud where the stallion and mare are resident;
- Registration of Section A colts by 31<sup>st</sup> July was in use in 2003 and late fees were comparatively higher.
- The fee to register an Approved Stallion has been reduced.

Members need to ask themselves as breeders what they want from the Society. The main purpose of any breed society is to ensure the integrity of the Studbook while remaining financially viable to continue into the future. Members also need to consider the following questions: Are we true to the breed and what we breed? Do we have faith in what we breed? The cost of registering a pony is so small when compared with the overall cost of producing that pony.

The following table shows registrations 2015–2018 when the old registration system was brought back in to try to get foals registered in the year of birth.

RPSBS Foal Registrations

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
Foals Registered	29	33	51	61

The Society is here to help members, should a breeder or member have difficulties in paying any registry transaction the paperwork should be submitted, once submitted it can be paid off as finances permit. It is important for breeders to submit the paperwork for foals in the year of birth even if payment is not made at the time, the Board then has a record of potential registrations and can plan into the future.

People have commented that they do not want to register foals in the year of birth because they have not had to do it in the past and that they would rather not register than pay additional fees. As previously stated, it is not imperative to pay all fees at the time of submission. The consequence of non registration is that the animal is not eligible to receive any of the promotional benefits allocated by the Society and the pony is not guaranteed any future as a stud animal unless registered. Promotional benefits include:

- Vouchers presented at EA Nationals and Grand National to the value of
- \$3,200 annually
- Sponsorship through Federal at EA Nationals and recognition of registered stock.
- Youngstock incentive payments. In 2017 \$1,500 payments were made to each of the states to distribute over its youngstock classes. Members and owners of registered stock only benefited
- Breeders, Stallion and Mare owners are recognised in the Stud Book.
- Instant look up of pedigree on the online studbook.
- Recognition on our web sites State and National.
- Inclusion into the Annual at our RPSBS run shows

It has been said we are in a drought and things are tight, with children growing, school fees, everything going up, etc. The Board understands these pressures, but showing people go out to a show with their entries done and pay on average \$50 at a large show per class and \$90 per stable (at Werribee) for fifteen minutes of walk trot and canter. A full tank of fuel averages at \$150 to \$200 pulled by a towing vehicle with cost ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 pulling a float costing \$20,000 to \$40,000. Costs may also include the day off work if a weekday, and at the end you may not even win a ribbon worth \$10. The few members that moan about cost of a lifetime animal registration and \$110 for a full year's membership should reflect on this.

Please do not breed if you cannot afford to feed the animal, but if you do be a responsible breeder and register it. Registration helps to safeguard the future of a foal, as a breeder you are responsible for that animal's well being and traceability so that it can still have a future even if you are no longer contactable.

Finally the Board of Directors has the responsibility of ensuring the viability of the Society into the future. The Society has to pay its bills and maintain its office and the online stud book.

It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that Riding Ponies bred in Australia are registered and recorded. Far too many of the Riding Ponies bred have not been registered in the past. Registering our ponies in the year of birth will help remedy this situation.

Thank you  
Robert Cockram

A comparative scale of fees 2009 vs 2019 was tabled. Robyn Vale suggested that the scale was published. It showed that many late fees have been removed and other reduced.

Helen Moore queried about registration of a gelding if it has not yet been gelded as no date can be noted on the application form. Helen Dohan advised that the application could be submitted and advice of gelding advised later. This would suffice unless the horse was to be shown in which case registration would need to be completed. The office can reduce fees for late registrations submitted by an owner who is not a breeder. Members are welcome to submit paperwork with no fees and pay them off.

## **PUBLICITY**

The Publicity report was not tabled formally and was included in the AGM papers only.

### Newsletters

We introduced monthly newsletters to keep members updated, and this has been well received. It gives each state an opportunity to promote events /news, and for members to keep updated on board happenings. The newsletters will continue to go out monthly.

### Website

The website has been kept up to date with any policy changes, judges and more. This year saw the addition of the members login to renew memberships online.

We also added a general email sign up, for non-members to have access to news and promotions.

### Social Media

Promotions via social media were ramped up this year. The Facebook page currently has over 3,300 page likes. We had a good response to sharing stallions and advertisers on social media.

An Instagram account was created, and we already have over 1,050 followers.

I encourage members to send photos for sharing on either page to [publicity@rpsbs.com.au](mailto:publicity@rpsbs.com.au) or message the RPSBS Facebook page.

### Advertising

This year we put two full page advertisements in Horse Deals. One full page in the EA Nationals Program and Full page in the Grand Nationals Program.

The Australian Performance Horse Magazine sponsored our high point awards putting a full page in their magazine each issue (bi monthly)

### RPSBS Annual Highpoint Awards

These were created to give back to the members, a membership incentive, and to assist the state shows by making state show results worth a lot more.

We had great entries, and we are very grateful for the sponsorship support received. The RPSBS Ltd via these awards have given out \$3,000 cash.

Thank you to our sponsors:  
Australian Performance Horse Magazine  
Essential Equine Nutrition  
Olympus Feeds  
Horse Deals  
Barastoc  
County Saddlery  
AustraliaGiddyup Girl  
Realities Cold Cast Bronze  
NRG Products

I welcome your feedback on these awards to: [publicity@rpsbs.com.au](mailto:publicity@rpsbs.com.au).

#### RPSBS Voucher Awards

These were once again awarded at the EA Nationals and Grand Nationals and very well received, congratulations to the owners and breeders.

#### National Sponsorship

The RPSBS Ltd sponsored the open large pony class at the EA Nationals that was won by the Riding Pony Mirinda Alabaster.

#### RPSBS Annual

The 2019 Annual is well underway and is scheduled to come out early August. I'd like to thank all the advertisers for their support in trying times with most of the country in drought.

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#### **2020 AGM**

The 2020 AGM is planned to be Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at the Holiday Inn Sydney Airport.

**Meeting closed at 4.55 pm**