

## ANBUG Executive Committee Transition Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

**Meeting held:** by Zoom teleconference

**Present:** Tracy Rushmer (TR, Outgoing President), Yun Liu (YL, Incoming President), Andrew Clulow (AJC, Outgoing Secretary), David Cortie (DC, Incoming Treasurer), Anna Paradowska (AP, Outgoing Treasurer), Chris Wensrich (CW, Incoming Vice President), Leonie van't Hag (LVH, Incoming Secretary), Karyn Jarvis (KJ, Incoming Website/Comms) & Teng Lu (TL, Incoming ECR Member).



**Apologies:** Ian Gentle (IRG, Immediate Past President), Katy Wood (KW, Outgoing Ordinary Member) & Ben Mallett (BM, Ordinary Member, NZ)

### Agenda

1. *Welcoming the new committee*
2. *Approval of David Cortie as the new treasurer and transfer of account privileges*
3. *Finances – Taxes and Prizes following AANSS 2020 (DC)*
4. *AANSS 2020 organising committee closing meeting*
5. *Miles Apperley's response to our letter sent earlier in the year*
6. *Matters of interest from the AONSA executive committee meeting (TR/YL/DC)*
7. *Any other business*

**Meeting Opened: 15:10**

### Items Discussed

#### *1. Welcoming the new committee*

TR welcomed the new committee members to the meeting and to the executive committee. The new committee will be dealing with the synchrotron user's advisory committee (UAC) to organise the joint ANSTO User Meeting in 2021. The committee committed to maintaining open lines of communication with Jamie Schulz (ANSTO) and the ACNS in general during these times when users and facility staff need to be nimble in responding to changing border environments and the short 2021-1 round. AP related that there was a major effort underway to make the most of the time available in the shortened 2021-1 round, which have been further complicated by the extended November-December OPAL shutdown.

#### *2. Approval of David Cortie as the new treasurer and transfer of account privileges*

DC was endorsed as the new treasurer and it was proposed that he be added as a signatory for the ANBUG accounts along with KW (ex officio) and AP (ex officio) such that there were three signatories for the ANBUG accounts. Two signatories are required for any funds transfer and this was currently only possible if AP and KW were together. The committee approved of adding DC to the list of signatories and AP and KW confirmed that they were happy to remain as signatories on the accounts (KW confirmed by email prior to the meeting).

#### *3. Finances – Taxes and Prizes following AANSS 2020 (DC)*

ANBUG raised nearly \$6000 from registrations for the AANSS 2020 meeting and ANBUG must determine the tax implications of this. DC is confirming what these will be with the accountant that registered ANBUG with an ABN. DC is also completing the paperwork with Eventbrite to confirm that ANBUG are not liable for US taxes. The committee debated how ANBUG would distribute that money to the students in lieu of

the approved motion at the AGM in November to use this money to support student attendance at future ANBUG meetings. DC was in favour of giving this in part as a prize with a prestigious name behind it to support a student to travel to the joint ANSTO User Meeting 2021. DC also proposed that in the future ANBUG could sponsor a student delegation to attend the analogous synchrotron user meeting and vice versa a synchrotron delegation could attend AANSS. AJC noted that ANBUG would likely not raise any revenue from the joint user meeting and so it would be worth considering spreading the student prizes out between the joint user meeting in 2021 and the AANSS meeting in 2022. He also noted that the synchrotron UAC did not have a budget in and of itself as it is not a separate entity from the synchrotron but that he would raise the suggestion of a student exchange with Mike James (ANSTO) and the UAC.

DC stated that he was still keen to begin running ANBUG-led masterclasses in neutron techniques that could raise some revenue in between meetings. AP noted that the powder diffraction workshop was very well attended and that the upcoming small angle scattering workshop attendance was capped due to high demand. ANBUG needs to distinguish its workshops/masterclasses from these larger ANSTO-led workshops. DC said that the online format would be ideal to draw in participants that normally wouldn't attend and AP agreed that this could also reach international and new users.

AP also proposed that we could start an ANBUG Youtube channel, where users could post home-made videos. DC agreed that this could be a good platform to launch if some energy was put into it and referenced Andrew Nelson's (ANSTO) refnx channel.

#### ***4. AANSS 2020 organising committee closing meeting***

The AANSS 2020 organising committee met on 27<sup>th</sup> November and it was generally agreed that the meeting had been a success. Based on feedback received so far, which had largely been by direct contact, attendees seemed to have had a positive experience in the virtual format. AJC sent a formal feedback survey devised by Kelly Cubbin (ANSTO) to all attendees and the findings from that should be known in the new year. Room for improvement was identified in the poster session, which could have been longer, moderators could have been better briefed on timekeeping and more poster judges should have been invited. Poster moderators on the committee noted that the poster session also wasn't as well attended by attendees, with mostly poster presenters and moderators in the poster rooms. AJC noted that this was the opposite at the synchrotron user meeting, the poster session was very well attended but the three parallel streams at the synchrotron meeting stifled debate in the oral sessions. Debate in the single stream oral sessions was more vibrant at AANSS 2020 from AJC's perspective and he attributed this to there simply being more people present in the single stream to ask questions of the presenters.

#### ***5. Response to our letter sent earlier in the year***

TR and AP outlined the letter sent to Miles Apperley (ANSTO) in May and the background from ACNS to the new committee.

The main issues raised by ANBUG were: the repeated impacts to the user community of delaying the 10-year OPAL long maintenance shutdown; supporting early career researchers and PhD students with special access programs; prioritising research being performed by Aus/NZ researchers or those funded by Australian funding bodies; developing remote access programs for user experiments; arranging regular webinars between ACNS and the user community to provide feedback; ANBUG's involvement in running scattering-related workshops and masterclasses; effectively communicating with the user community during COVID; and considering how both NSW and other Aus/NZ beamtime could best be accommodated under different levels of COVID restrictions.

A number of these issues had been addressed by Jamie Schulz (ANSTO) throughout the year since the letter was sent and at the recent AGM as part of AANSS 2020, including: supporting access to OPAL instruments for students and ECRs through the director's discretionary program; development/expansion of remote/mail in programs on Quokka and Echidna, with more beamlines looking into this; providing direct support both

monetarily and with staff time towards AANSS 2020 and future planned ANBUG workshops/masterclasses; and maintaining regular contact with ANBUG throughout the rapidly evolving COVID restriction changes.

Mile's responses reinforced these points and also elaborated, stating that: ANSTO was responding to federal and state government pandemic response directives; health and safety of ANSTO staff was to be ensured; COVID-19 essential research was being offered an access program across ANSTO's platforms; resuming user operations was limited by travel restrictions by states and universities and the continuity of supply of nuclear medicine; ACNS returned to user operations in June 2020, the synchrotron has been impacted for longer due to the lock down of Melbourne; NSW users were able to access the site most easily, some interstate collaborative experiments have been performed by NSW users and some users from SA had recently visited the site; ACNS has been hosting Tuesday webinars that have been broadcast to the ANBUG and Taiwan research communities; ANSTO is also putting out a newsletter "Scatter Matters" and the user community is encouraged to submit content; the ANSTO powder diffraction school had 400 online registrants, the small angle scattering workshop would run in December 2020 and the imaging school had been delayed by additional demands on the associated team members working under COVID restrictions; beamtime in the 2021-1 round would largely go to Australian researchers due to international travel restrictions; the OPAL long shut down has now been delayed twice due to issues with supply of medical radioisotopes and COVID-related shutdown of international travel leading to the risk that the TG123 primary shutter team might contract COVID-19.

It was generally agreed that ANSTO is trying to operate as best it can within a COVID-safe framework. DC noted that there would be significant disruption in rounds 2021-1 and 2021-2, and that communication from ANSTO could be more forthcoming about that. He also noted that the rejection letters could at least be changed to explain to the general user community the reasons behind this as they have been the same for the last 4 proposal rounds that have been impacted by the ongoing issues with rescheduling the OPAL long-shutdown. AP said that information on the application/rejection rates is available through reports that Jamie writes following each proposal round.

AP suggested that we should have sent this letter to Simone Richter (ANSTO) to affect greater changes within the NSTLI framework. The framework of the ANBUG letter was also discussed and it was proposed that next time ANBUG writes directly to the ANSTO executive, we should make formal recommendations to ANSTO/ACNS as to what changes the ANBUG executive/community thinks could be made, rather than simply asking for clarifications.

DC again emphasised how low success rates, particularly on certain beamlines, have negatively impacted students and ECRs in particular – including those with AINSE PGRAs who are unable to get beamtime awarded. The bar for entry for new users also appears to be too high, with first time users often giving up on applying having been rejected cycle after cycle.

AP suggested that the ANBUG executive write a new letter suggesting that there be a special access program for new Aus/NZ users or program proposals specifically for ECRs/AINSE PGRAs that would guarantee them a few days of beamtime per cycle. This was generally accepted as a step forward by the committee. TR noted that there could be a first-time user checkbox on the proposal forms that would flag that perhaps rather than rejecting the entire proposal that some time could be granted to give the new users experience. CW noted that this would somehow have to interface with the new anonymisation of proposals announced to the community at the ANBUG AGM in November by Jamie Schulz.

TR will introduce YL to Miles and notify him and Jamie that there will be future correspondence to the ANSTO executive with ANBUG proposals for future development of the proposal system.

## ***6. Matters of interest from the AONSA executive committee meeting (TR/YL/DC)***

TR/YL/DC attended the AONSA executive committee meeting and facility updates. TR and YL agreed to share the ANBUG responsibilities with AONSA going forward. DC noted that until attending the AONSA

meetings he did not appreciate how big AONSA was. From the recent meeting: DC liked the Japanese neutron society award for technical development and noted that all of the AONSA neutron societies are talking about putting together online lectures/workshops on neutron scattering. This puts us in a good space for developing masterclasses but ANBUG should be facilitating online meetings with ANSTO experts. YL noted that in the facility meetings remote operations were proposed take more of a focus in the future even after COVID restrictions draw to a close.

#### *7. Any other business*

YL thanked the outgoing members of the committee for all of their efforts to make ANBUG a more active community over the past few years and welcomed the new committee members.

**Meeting Closed: 16:35**