

23 September 2017

General Forum - Transcription

Karen Fitt

There's an opportunity, since we still have some time remaining, there is an opportunity for a general forum, if people would like to ask any questions or make any comments in general.

Kathy Minchin

Hi, I'm Kathy Minchin from Adelaide. I've proposed to the committee that we allow Therapists from developing countries, that volunteer Therapists from Australia sponsored or mentored, have access to the Google Group. And I know I've had a great response, I think there's a survey monkey going out. And I guess it would be nice to find from the floor how many people would, I guess, agree with that.

Julia Wild

Just for a few reasons, we haven't put that survey monkey together as yet. And I have just put out a general canvas to the Google Groups, because it's their information that they would be potentially sharing. So far, the response is quite positive, *per re?* one response was as long as there is enough provision there, to restrict things. But really my view was that the person, the people going to the developing countries, doing work with someone they have already established a relationship with, and they would actually need to nominate a person from a developing country, so that they have been vetted. And that they would understand the rules, that all of us get when we join a Google Groups, and that they would be proposed and nominated. So, someone would already be knowing them on a professional basis, and it would be recommended.

I actually think as a Google Group we might actually benefit from seeing amazing things and hear really complex things someone comes up with, amazingly simple but having to use simple things to achieve stuff. So, the Google Group might actually learn quite a bit from it. But I think, I don't know this, but I assume that people already volunteering, going over there, have already given a lot of their time and effort, and it would be a nice way for the general group to actually contribute and lighten the load for somebody volunteering. It might create good links, that people might do more sponsoring. Create things that that developing group, between the Google group and the group like the volunteers. It might create more of that.

It was just that people were concerned that intellectual property might go out, and I just tried to make people aware that they would already have been nominated and vetted, and that in the Google Group, if there is anything that we know has not been adhered to, it is quite easy to remove someone from the Google group once it becomes known.

Kathy Minchin

Would there be a fee? A fee for the..



Julia Wild

There's not a fee for us to join, but we are part of the AHTA. I would think that, you know, it's part of our ethos to help other areas in developing countries. But I can't see that we would need a fee, because it's not going to cost us anything. Unless anyone has any other knowledge on that? I can't imagine that there would be a fee.

Kathy Minchin

Exactly.

There was, do you do a separate Group just for developing countries, but I actually think it would be nicer that the general population of the AHTA give back and contribute, and lighten the load for the people who are volunteering already.

And yeah, they might create relationships and say I will sponsor you to a conference, or *create a donation*, or come over and spend a week with me here.

Beth Taylor

Just putting it out there, just as a rural member, remote member, the scholarship that is available for rural and remote Therapists, members, I'm just wondering if that could potentially be available for more than the core courses of the AHTA?

Carla Bingham

That's something to think about, but at this stage we've actually filled the allocated number with our core courses and I guess that we are trying to achieve as part of our strategic plan, to make sure that we reached more opportunities to rural and remote and to provide that to our core courses. Next year we were going to then just see if we could propose to do that again. At this stage though it was just a 12-month trial. But we will certainly look into it, if it doesn't fill those recommendations.

Karen Fitt

Thanks everyone from coming. Is there anything further? No. Oh, Hamish...

Hamish Anderson

Just further to what Beth said, can I just put it on notice that I would actually like to see the opportunities for rural and remote Therapists actual expanded. So, going beyond the current scholarship program we've got going. It's my personal view that we don't, as a group, do enough for rural and remote Therapists. We should actually, this might be a little controversial, we should actually be empathising their education above international or third world education. And I say this only because working in a public hospital now, I have to refer out consistently, to rural and remote Therapists and I just find the level of understanding of what they need to do is way below what it actually should be. So as an Association we should be doing a lot more for those people. Thank you.



Karen Fitt

Thank you, Hamish, I think that's a very good point. And that's the sort of feedback that, as a Management Committee, we really appreciate. It helps with our, it will feed directly into next year's activities, I think. It's a great idea.

Barb Hall

I think that you could give us a few more comments about your proposal about AHTA having a CEO. I thought that was really interesting. I just wanted some more information on what you were thinking, and how this was looking in terms of timeframes.

Karen Fitt

So, at our strategic planning meeting, John Peacock, the General Manager from the Association forum as you know, the strategic planning meeting, and over the last few years due to the growth of the Association he has recommended on a number of occasions that we do need somebody to oversee and run the organisation, because it's quite a large entity. And as the current Chair of the Association, I would say that it is increasingly difficult to run a cohesive Association, with all of our excellent staff, in remote locations, and the Management Committee needs to, we have our Management Meetings and then we go away and do a lot of the work ourselves. And we need someone to pull it together, we need someone to be the boss. Sarah and Kate get a new boss every year, it's quite difficult, I think, I expect. To have no sitting person there continuously, running the show. And so, there are some of the ideas. With other Associations the natural progression is, at this point in time, to appoint a CEO. So for all of those reasons, but also to offload and to do a lot of the work of the Management Committee. I guess they are probably the main reasons that the Association would appoint a CEO.

We can afford it, and, the timing is more, in terms of the year 2020, I think that we need to be sure that our profits are adequate over that period of time, and continue to be as they currently are, adequate to remunerate the CEO. And also, just for planning, it will take a number of years of talking about if that is the correct path and the process you would undertake to appoint a CEO. I think that that would be the natural time frame.

But it's not set in stone, that's just the vision for the future and a recommendation that I would make, after being in the role for a little bit of time.

Janet Dindler

So, could I ask Sarah for her opinion on a CEO?

laughter

Sarah Dixon

Hi Janet. I agree, and I know Kate does as well. We have discussed it at times and, as Karen has stated, it can be difficult having a new president every year, and the things that come with that, and volunteer roles, and what's expected. We can be chasing after Management Committee members with demands of them, and they can't always get



back to us in a timely manner that we need in order to move forward. So, I think a CEO is good in that way, in that we would have someone who would respond and that we could move forward with our roles easier as well.

And for the Association, I think we've grown so much over the last 7 years since I've started certainly, and it would be nice to have that one port of call. And to ease up the load for the Management Committee as well, I think.

Karen Fitt

It is worth remembering that we have doubled our membership in the past 5 years. So, the role of Management Committee is huge now.

Karen Fitt

At the moment, we are actively involved in the Allied Health Professionals Association and APA, and at those meetings, we are there with the CEO's of all of those organisations. And at the moment, it would be nice to have a CEO of our own to attend those meetings, as a continual person who is abreast of the current legislative changes, the topics of interest in the Health Industry, someone to represent us, and someone to truly advance our profession. That would be one very valuable activity that would be undertaken by a CEO.

Trish Holmes

What would be the qualities of that, to add that thing? *Inaudible*

Karen Fitt

A CEO would have skills in the advancement of our profession that many of us as Therapists wouldn't.

I hope that answers the questions. Did anyone else have any questions about the CEO?

Okay, thank you, great question. I think we're done.