

Member Meeting Minutes

HELD: Monday, 30th June 2025 - 7.30pm AEST

Time	Item
19:30	1. Welcome
	2. Apologies & Attendees Apologies (12): Angela Sullivan, Margaret Keeble, Catherine Storm, Kylie Bannerman, Robynn Dowd, Rebecca Share, Fiona Eichler, Irene Moore, Felicity Northeast, Cristina De Prada, DJ Mannington, Christine Waring Attendees (26): Georgia Skelton, Tracey Tau, Kathryn Campbell, Sarah Mensforth, Sandy Forrester, Serena Lindeman, Julia Watson, Joanne Cooke, Jo Peterson, Phillip Rhodes, Michele Cameron, Christine Martin, Marea Bright, Rose Hudson, Louise Macdonald, Linda Ford, Ginetta Rossitano, Sue Younis, Delphine Nicholson, Lisa Watt, Fiona Cooper, Bec Bayss, Wies Mauduit-Jansen, Rachael Henson, Desleigh Lobsey, Jess Maddox
	3. Passing of May 2025 Meeting Minutes 3.1 Motion: to approve the Minutes of the May meeting Proposed: Kathy Campbell, First: Christine Martin; Second: Michele Cameron
	4. Treasurer Reports 4.1 Financial Reports - P&L & Balance Sheet – Overview 4.2 Motion: to approve the Financial Reports and to ratify the payments made by the Committee Proposed: Sarah Mensforth, First: Georgia Skelton; Second: Sandy Forrester
	5. President's Report 5.1 Welcome to New Student Members – Jess Maddox (NSW) & Lou Kubicki (VIC) 5.2 Thank Yous, Reminders & Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Design Award & Gala</u> <p>"I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who played a role in the awards and the Gala. A special thank you to Sarah Mensforth and Kelly Dart Fagan for their efforts leading up to the gala as part of the subcommittee. A big thank you to Rachael Hart, who worked closely with the venue and staff, shining</p>

Time	Item
	<p>like a diamond on the night and attending to every detail. The event was one we should all be very proud of, and the feedback has been phenomenal. Rachael and Sarah will have more details later.</p> <p>A heartfelt thank you to Jo Peterson for leading the design award team and photo shoot, sourcing prizes for the winners, producing the certificates, labels, and catalogue, all while continuing her social media role. Your dedication and hard work are greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to all the Milliners and students who participated in the competitions, providing a spectacular showcase of Australian Millinery. Without your efforts there would be no event. Congratulations to you all.</p> <p>To maintain the momentum for 2026, I think it would be wise to host the gala again in Melbourne. Rachael Hart has kindly volunteered to organize it for us at the same venue. However, as we are a National Association, if you wish to run the Gala or the Design Award in your state, please email the Secretary before the next committee meeting on July 14 with your ideas. Securing bookings for decent venues early is essential.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Guest Speakers</u> <p>“Just a friendly reminder to be on the lookout for guest speakers for our general meetings. If you could ask potential speakers if they would be willing to volunteer their time to speak at the start of a meeting and obtain their contact details, that would be great. Please pass on their information to Kathy Campbell, our Secretary, for follow-up.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Newsletter</u> <p>“Would anyone be willing to volunteer as a co-editor for our newsletter alongside Serena? This role is an important aspect of the Associates membership, but it doesn't require a significant time commitment. The newsletter is brief, typically just one or two PDF pages. While it's currently created using Canva, you can use any program that suits you. Your help would be greatly appreciated!”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Membership Renewals</u> <p>“Although it may seem unusual to mention membership renewals in June, I kindly ask you to budget for your membership fees in anticipation of the November AGM. Last year, we had 44 members with outstanding fees at the time of this year's planning meeting. This caused our volunteer committee significant concern, as we were unsure if these were due to oversights, hardships, or membership cancellations. Tracey Tau and I spent hours on the phone, resulting in most members renewing. If you are experiencing genuine hardship, please email any committee member you feel comfortable talking to for consideration before the due date. If you are not facing hardship, please pay on time to lessen the workload and stress of our committee and to remain on our email list, website and Facebook members page after the AGM date.”</p> <p>[** Noted that having to personally chase membership renewal payments is too hard and unfair on the Committee members, who are trying to set an agenda based on an unknown financial status.]</p>

Time	Item
	<p data-bbox="363 215 683 248">5.3 Block Library update</p> <p data-bbox="363 282 1417 517">“All 477 working blocks have been catalogued. Over the coming months, we will assess which of the damaged blocks will be repaired and catalogued, and which ones will be offered for sale as is. The sale of the double-ups has gone well, with 17 excess brims sold, 12 of 29 domes sold, and the 2 wooden heads sold. The sale closes this Saturday, after which I will work with Sarah to get them invoiced and sent out to you. If you have bought a block, please pay for it immediately upon request.</p> <p data-bbox="363 551 1062 584">This money will go towards future-proofing the library.</p> <p data-bbox="363 618 1425 786">Shortly, you will receive an email asking if you wish to be part of the trial run of the library, which will commence on August 1st and run until the AGM in November. The cost will be \$90 for Metro Victoria, \$60 for Regional Victoria, and \$45 for Interstate. Please reply and pay promptly to assist the volunteers who are setting up the database.”</p> <p data-bbox="363 835 1158 869">5.4 What’s on Around Australia – State Roll Call of attendees</p> <ul data-bbox="363 902 1177 969" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 902 1177 969">• Vic – 16, NSW – 6, Qld – 2, ACT – 1, Netherlands – 1 ** No members present from SA, WA, NT, Tassy, Spain <p data-bbox="363 1003 1169 1037">5.5 MAA – Is it Time for a Change? – Membership Discussion</p> <ul data-bbox="363 1070 1385 1137" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 1070 1385 1137">• Georgia read through the proposal and opened the floor to the members in attendance to discuss. <p data-bbox="363 1182 1425 1350">“When I joined the association 14 years ago, the membership requirement was a Certificate IV or equivalent, along with two MAA members to act as referees. Last year marked the end of millinery TAFE studies in Australia, and the 2024 committee did an excellent job of creating an application form to ensure that new members meet the same standard.</p> <p data-bbox="363 1361 1425 1597">Many of us assumed that this level of qualification had always been required, but after spending time with the archives and Hall of Fame members, I now understand that this was not the case. The association was formed 30 years ago to cultivate friendships, pool resources for events, and provide education for its members. The only requirement for membership was a love of making millinery. People with very little training were encouraged to join, and everyone was united under one umbrella: a member of The Millinery Association of Australia.</p> <p data-bbox="363 1608 1425 1742">There are many milliners with large social followings and public respect who would not qualify or be interested in putting in the effort required to apply for membership under our current system. I believe we need to welcome these milliners to secure our future.</p> <p data-bbox="363 1753 1425 1955">For example, some of these milliners may only make felt hats. They do them well and are not interested in other materials or techniques. They have a large following and the respect and admiration of the public, yet under our current system, we have the door locked to them. If we are not interested in them, we cannot expect for them to hold us in high regard either. Having any barrier to these milliners joining our association is not serving us.</p> <p data-bbox="363 1966 1425 2033">My suggestion is to remove the word "Fellow" and its requirements and replace it with the word "Member." We should keep the student and associate memberships</p>

Time	Item
	<p>and add a “Friends” category that would entitle them to discount tickets for our non-educational events.</p> <p>Some members may suggest that we have a tiered membership and keep the Fellow title. I urge caution with this idea, as I don't think we can be welcoming on one hand and exclusive on the other, especially now as the road to becoming a Fellow is paved with difficulties. For those members, be assured your skills and qualifications can be reflected in your bio if you wish.</p> <p>A reinvention of the association, coupled with some promotional efforts, should lead to a boost in membership and provide us with more funds to host events and offer education. This aligns perfectly with our philosophy. With all TAFEs now closed to millinery tuition, the need for education is more critical than ever. We have excellent tutors throughout Australia who are willing to pass on their knowledge, but there are fewer opportunities for them to do so. I believe the association should be a key player in providing education for the next generation of milliners; if not us, then who?</p> <p>In closing, I think this change coupled with the opening of the Block Library could be a great membership drive for 2026. The more members we have the stronger we can be to raise the profile of millinery in Australia.</p> <p>I received a call from Rebecca Share regarding a concern about the education component of my document. I appreciate Rebecca for bringing this to my attention, as it allows me to clarify my intentions. I do not mean for the MAA to become a school and start running classes every week in competition with our associate and member tutors. Instead, the MAA will support our Associate tutors by helping them advertise their classes within the MAA framework and provide employment opportunities through workshops for our members. This initiative is meant to complement their business rather than compete with it.</p> <p>I would also love to suggest that we run a mini conference in 2027 or 2028. Those of us fortunate enough to have attended these in the past know firsthand how beneficial they are, not just for education, but also for the friendships and fun we experience. However, those of us who have helped organize them also know how much work it takes. If we decide to proceed, I will first call on members with experience in running these events for advice on potential pitfalls before calling for a subcommittee to begin researching and planning. This job is too big to add to the committees already long to do list.</p> <p>There have been no questions emailed to me so who would anyone like to begin the discussion?”</p> <p>Member Discussion commentary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Peterson – “I love it”. • Louise Macdonald - confirmed her concern that education offered by the Association should not compete with the current education providers/ members. GS confirmed that this would not be the case. GS confirmed that she provided the same response to Rebecca Share, when she raised the same concern. LM confirmed that changing the membership structure to adapt to the changing times (i.e. lack of institutionalized millinery education) is necessary to prevent the Association membership from fading away. Adaptation is critically important. • Weis Mauduit-Jansen – confirmed that the Dutch Association welcomes anyone who likes hats. Therefore, with the number of members they have, they can publish the Hatlines Magazine 4 times a year. Broader membership means you are more likely to get more active members in a variety of ways and will buoy the financial status of the Association. Recognised the lack of

Time	Item
	<p>apprenticeships and formal training in the millinery world, so need to support this expanded idea. Broader membership is needed to ensure that there are enough members who are willing to step up and help run the Association, recognizing that there are always members who do nothing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose Hudson – wants to maintain the Fellow Member title, as this reflects the many years and hard work, and is often the only accreditation that some members have. Many current members would be proud to call themselves “Fellows”. It is a different standing to anyone else doing millinery. It means that you have a certain level of experience. Nothing wrong with having standard, they are important, and we should not let the standard of “Fellow” slide. • Phillip Rhodes – need to be more inclusive and recognize that younger people will turn to short courses to learn and will call themselves ‘milliner’. We need to adapt and accept that millinery is a wide concept. Older trade of millinery was about adding embellishment and need to limit the idea that “couture-making millinery is the standard”. Need to be more inclusive and engaged with what is likely to be the future. Can no longer judge those who are leaning from online courses and need to accept that we want them as members. Need to make it easy for people to be a member. • Louise Macdonald – need to reassess the membership fees and entitlements of each membership type, so that it is beneficial to the Association. Fellow membership requirement cannot stay as is if we are going to still be here in 5 years’ time. • Georgia – now is the time to get more younger members on board. We need to look at this from the perspective of the Association overall, and not what affects each of us personally. Holding on to the term Fellow may not be to the advantage of the Association, even though many members like being able to call themselves Fellows. Keeping the Fellow Membership raises the questions of who and how you then say no to them, that they are not good enough to join the ranks of Fellow, and the impact. • Rose Hudson – agrees with the broader ‘Friends’ category, but it would be interesting to poll the current Fellow members to see who is prepared to lose the Fellow title. It is important to us to change and adapt, but asking if it is necessary to throw out all the old, just to accommodate the new? Why can’t they sit side-by-side? • Rachael Henson – it is time for us to ask if we want the MAA to be in existence in a few years’ time, it is only going to get harder [to maintain membership], given the change in the education landscape, for the worse. It is getting harder to achieve a millinery qualification, with formal education opportunities reducing. Important for the Association to change. Need to look at membership as a place for like-minded people. Keeping the tiers is going to become problematic. Need to make the change now. Doesn’t believe that this will affect the reputations of milliners who have been in the game a long time. Now is the time to make a change so that we are increasing revenue instead of treading water to keep the MAA sustainable. • Lisa Watt – there has been a shift over the years, when she started 10 years ago as a student. Recognises that the standards we work to for e.g. the DA, will need to be completely reassessed, with DA criteria needing to be changed, as we would be inviting milliners of all levels. While not wanting to deny anyone else, it feels a little sad to give the “fellow” status away, but change is important. Critical as to how any change is launched and brought to the market. Is a big thing and could be very exciting. • Bec Bayss – supports conventions for education and any form of face-to-face education, as it is great to have as a get together as well. Doesn’t believe

Time	Item
	<p>that this approach would give any rise for concern amongst the educator members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia – mixing inexperienced and experienced milliners will ultimately raise the quality of millinery, especially if experience milliners are involved in teaching and passing on their skills and knowledge. Working on the idea of integrating associate educator classes on the MAA website. This will support MAA teaching milliners under the umbrella of MAA, at no profit for the MAA. Just to provide opportunities for our members and cover our costs in providing members with opportunities. • Sarah Mensforth – Raised the idea of a points-based skills recognition system, so that it works to upskill, and to keep the teaching of millinery going, via in-person (our existing TAFT teachers) and online courses. Maybe linking to Hat Academy etc?? • Michele Cameron – need to look beyond personal interests, need to consider what is going to be best for the Association. Recognise that when students mix with experienced milliners, the students will improve and will continue to promote millinery and advance with association. Need to change, need to open up the Association and embrace the change. It is important to pass on skills and information to others, so that the knowledge passes on to the next generation. • Tracey Tau – Initially was concerned with the dropping of the Fellow, from the point of view that this is reflective of having completed the Certificate IV at Kangan. There is still room to recognize the skill level associated with the word Fellow. Maybe a Mentorship program using the existing Fellows. Need to identify a way of embracing the Cert III and Cert IV attainees, without excluding new members of different skill levels. All ideas need to be assessed and thought of. If any member has any ideas, they need to make them knows. We need to bring in as many members as we can, and we need to start making change now. • Serena Lindeman – Can feel a shift from a credentiaally-identified membership to the more inclusive membership. Members know who they are, and it is not really necessary to keep identifying members by separate categories of Student and Fellow. At the end of the day, your work will tell the story of what type/ kind of milliner you are. • Kathy Campbell – raised the question of Milliner Profiles on the MAA website and how that might be impacted. • Georgia – confirmed that she proposed the maintenance of the Student Membership category with no voting rights. Maybe years of experience is a qualifying factor for membership type. • Lisa Watt – confirmed that the MAA was not there to secure or promote business for individual members as millinery makers, and asked if that was the same for the Associate educator members. GS confirmed that the promotion of education is under the umbrella of the MAA and will keep millinery going and raise the profile of millinery, which is the core objective of the association. So, the promotion by MAA is of education, not the millinery of the member educator milliners. • Jo Peterson – Qualification is not necessarily the mark of quality. Some members have a Tafe qualification and some don't. Customers are after a milliner's style/ work, not based upon qualification. To be around like-minded people pushed you to learn and do better. Education matters, but how much does it really matter to the customer? • Marea Bright – new milliners have a lot to learn, and they learn that by being amongst us. We are better off all being 'Members', because we are one-and-all, and that's what it was all about in the first place. Important that we understand that it's not what the MAA can do for us, but what we can do for

Time	Item
	<p>the MAA. Marea's main concern is that people are not wearing hats/ millinery as they once did before Covid. Need to encourage more people to attend our events. Changes within the VRC is having a negative impact on their members attending events and wearing millinery. So, we need to concentrate on how we are going to get people to buy hats, and to educate the public about millinery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bec Bayss – asked Georgia why it was that she was keen to invite 'Instagram' milliners to become members of the MAA? GS answered that it was simply because they make millinery. We cannot close the door to them, because that would be doing the MAA a disservice by not approaching them to become members. We need to create the opportunities for expanded membership, instead of creating hurdles/ barriers for entry. <p>➔ GS to create a survey for all members to complete to get a better understanding.</p>
	<p>6. Design & Student Awards & Gala</p> <p>6.1 <u>Design Awards Wrap-Up</u> – Jo Peterson – fabulous event, thank you to the Committee, prize pool smaller than usual, but that's not why people enter. 43 entries, of which 38 entries arrived. Budget exceeded because of model illness at photo shoot. Thanks to Georgia (and hubby) for hosting the photo shoot; Lisa Watt for doing a great job as assistant to Richard Shaw and post production; Anita Marshall for styling, direction and Anita drafted the patterns and made the clothing; Sarah Mensforth for the behind-the-scenes photography and videos; Chris Mullane and Lisette Margini as hat wranglers and timekeepers, and Richard Shaw for the photography. Hair/ Make-up and models were all great. Thanks to the Sponsors, without whom we could not run the event – Millinery Australia, Hat Magazine, Awon Golding, Hat Blocks Australia, Hat Talk, House Of Adorn, Richard Shaw, Hatters, Louise Macdonald. Many thanks to Fiona Cooper for her 'Celebration' and 'Street' logo designs, and for organizing the banner for the Gala. Thank you to the judges – Louise Macdonald, Michele Cameron & Alicia Marshall. Georgia thanked Jo for all her work.</p> <p>6.2 <u>Student Awards Wrap-Up</u> – Georgia – 12 entries, Kelly Maskell was the first student in seven years to achieve a perfect score from all 3 judges. Thanks to the judges – Tracey Tau, Irene Moore, Phillip Rhodes. There was a very high standard from the student entries this year.</p> <p>6.3 <u>Design Awards Gala Wrap-up</u> – Sarah Mensforth nominated Georgia to report, as Sarah did not attend due to illness. Gala was 'really good', we sold 116 tickets, plus 10 VIP tickets. Attendees from industry. IT is encouraging that people are increasingly interested in attending this event. Plan to send out a link to the photos from the Gala, once they have been uploaded to the website. Next year's Gala date will be sent out as a "Save The Date" as soon as possible, once the date has been determined by the Committee.</p>

	<p>7. General Business – Open to Members</p> <p>7.1 Remembering Alison Morgan – Minute of Silence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder that the Memorial is on Thursday, 3rd July at the Ballarat Golf Club and 3pm – all members are welcome, wear a hat and wear bright colours. There will be a display of hats Alison made, as well as her wonderful quilts. <p>7.2 Milliners 4 Recovery – Bec Bayss – still needs a few images from some contributors (11 people). Bec has 50 hats already. Auction will go live on Sunday 6th July. All hats will have a reserve of \$50. Bec will advise milliner of sale, and details of who to send it to. Postage is in Australia only.</p>
	<p>8. Next Meeting Wednesday, 30th July @ 7.30pm AEST Via Zoom & In-Person: Hawthorn Library 584 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, 3122</p>
21:08	<p>9. Meeting Close</p>