



**The Wyvern Society
Founded 1899**

**Annual General Meeting
MINUTES**

**Thursday 13th of March 2024 at 6:00pm
Eakins Foyer and Zoom Meeting**

Meeting opened at 6:02pm

1. Attendees:

In person: Jessica Attenborough, Etsegenet Herschmann, Katie Skillington, Michael Stepniak, Nicole Crook, Ben Fon, Sam Lieberman, George Willox, Frank Opray, Kari Kongshem, Sally Morris, Lisa Shimano

Via Zoom: Natalie Everett, Louise Ryan, Sebastian Bombaci, Lachlan Lewis

Apologies: Warrick Brewer, Michael Betts, Don Glasson, Sara Wills

2. Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and pay my respect to elders past and present.

3. Welcome by the Arch Wyvern (by Katie Skillington)

As my first year serving as Arch Wyvern draws to a close, it has been both an honour and a privilege to represent the Wyvern Society and engage with the incredible alumni community of Queen's College. I am pleased to provide this report on the Society's activities and achievements over the past year.

Collegian's Dinner and Commencement Dinner

It was a pleasure to represent the Wyverns at both the Collegian's Dinner in 2024 and the Commencement Dinner earlier this week. Across these two events, we had the opportunity to award over 100 Wyvern Medals in total – a significant recognition of excellence within our student community. It was fantastic to see so many students coming together to celebrate their achievements, and, as tradition dictates, a few spoon bangs were enjoyed in celebration.

Wyvern Society Cocktails in the Quad

Our major event for 2024 was the Wyvern Society Cocktails in the Quad. Despite the chilly evening, we had a fantastic turnout of over 140 Wyverns. The event served as a quasi-reunion for the peer years of 2004 and 2014, while also bringing together Wyverns from all cohorts for a night of conversation, reconnection, and celebration.

During this event, we also had the pleasure of awarding our Wyvern of the Year to Andrew Hudson. With 25 years in public policy, advocacy, and leadership, Andrew has worked across NGOs, the UN, the private sector, and government. Committed to collaboration and systemic change, he has improved the lives of disadvantaged individuals around the world, making him a worthy recipient of this honour.

Wyvern Society Scholarship

In 2024, we continued our commitment to supporting the Wyvern Society Scholarship, which provides assistance to students who may otherwise struggle to attend Queen's. As of this writing, we have supported three students since the scholarship was introduced in 2023.

Our 2024 recipient, Jemma Fenshaw, a B.Sc student aspiring to become a veterinarian, joined Queen's after previously living in alternative student accommodation. Before receiving the scholarship, she found the university experience isolating. Since joining Queen's, she has thrived in a supportive and encouraging environment, maintained strong academic results, and built a positive social network. Looking ahead, our 2025 scholarship recipient is Alice Roberts, who hails from Moriac and is also a Naarm Scholar. We are proud to continue offering support to outstanding students like Jemma and Alice.

The Wyvern Society Scholarship Fund also saw an additional contribution in early 2025, which we have generated through the Wyvern Society membership fees that students pay on entry to College. This has brought the total balance to just over \$200,000. We remain committed to growing this fund to ensure continued support for underrepresented students at Queen's.

Wyvern Society Prize

Another initiative – albeit a smaller one – we continued in 2024 was the Wyvern Society Prize, which recognises creative responses to a stimulus. This year, the theme focused on mental health in the community. A special thank you to our committee members who served as judges for this prize – we greatly appreciate your time and dedication.

Farewell to Dr. Stewart Gill & Welcome to Dr. Michael Stepniak

In 2024, we also bid farewell to Dr. Stewart Gill, the former Master of Queen's College. I had the privilege of speaking on behalf of the Wyverns at Stewart's farewell, highlighting his steadfast dedication, good humour, and incredible patience in his role. Stewart's impact on the College has been significant, and we are grateful for his leadership and wish him all the best of the future.

As we look to the future, we warmly welcome Dr. Michael Stepniak as the ninth Master of Queen's College. The Wyvern Society is eager to collaborate with Michael as he leads the College into a new era.

Acknowledgments

Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to the Wyvern Society Committee and the Advancement Team for their support throughout the year. It has been a pleasure working alongside such dedicated individuals that can put up with my either rapid or late responses to emails (it's never in between!). I look forward to another fantastic year ahead.

The Wyvern Committee is always looking for new members, particularly from peer years that are currently unrepresented. This is a great opportunity to stay connected with the Queen's community, contribute to Wyvern initiatives, and help shape future events and programs. We hold hybrid meetings, so you don't need to be in Melbourne to get involved – Wyverns from all locations are welcome! If you're passionate about keeping the Wyvern spirit alive and want to help strengthen our alumni network, we'd love to hear from you.

4. 2024 Financial Statement

The final result for 2024 was a deficit of \$15,030

This included a donation of \$15,000 to the Wyvern Society Scholarship.

The net cash assets of the Society are \$76,620

The financial statement was confirmed as true and correct.

MOVED: George Willox

SECONDED: Jessica Attenborough

5. 2024 AGM Minutes

The 2024 minutes were confirmed as true and correct.

MOVED: George Willox

SECONDED: Jessica Attenborough

6. College report (by Nicole Crook)

Good evening. My name is Nicole Crook, and I'm the Executive Director of Advancement at Queen's College. It's my pleasure to provide a brief report from the College for 2024 before I hand over to our Master/Head of College, Dr. Michael Stepniak.

Life at Queen's College continued to thrive in 2024, providing a vibrant, supportive, and enriching environment for both students and the broader Queen's community.

The College continued to enjoy high levels of academic success, with an overall record number of 141 Wyvern medals being awarded for students achieving an H1 or above. In sport the year began well with a wins from Men's cricket and men's football, and women's netball and basketball teams also won their finals.

High levels of demand for residence enabled the College to continue to admit students from a diverse range of backgrounds with a First Nations cohort of 14 students, and the number of students admitted from regional Australia broadly proportional to the number of students enrolled from metropolitan Melbourne and from interstate. The international cohort comprised of students from some 15 different countries.

The College continued to maintain levels of financial support with over 100 students in 2024 receiving scholarships or bursaries. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Wyvern Society for its ongoing contribution to the **Wyvern Society Scholarship**—an incredibly important initiative that assists students who would otherwise be unable to attend Queen's without financial support. In addition to this, the Society has supported other initiatives, including sponsorship of an **Art Prize** and the production of the **Wyvern Medals**.

In 2024, Queen's College organized and hosted over 37 events, engaging almost 2,000 community members. Our Open Days were particularly successful, attracting over 2,000 visitors who were keen to learn more about the College and its offerings. We also had the privilege of hosting several notable events throughout the year, some of which stand out as highlights:

- **Reunions were held in Geelong, Sydney, Perth, and London:** These reunions were a fantastic opportunity for Wyverns to reconnect and reflect on their time at the College.
- **The 50 Years and Beyond Luncheon:** This event celebrated the rich history of Queen's College and recognised the contributions of our alumni over the decades.
- **A number of Sugden Society events** – supporting our Bequest programme.
- **The End of Year Wyvern Society Drinks:** was a well-attended event which brought together Wyverns from across generations to celebrate another successful year.
- **The Creative Industries Dinner:** This unique event allowed Wyverns from the creative fields to engage with students at their respective tables, sparking meaningful conversations and connections.
- **Young Wyvern Drinks:** is an increasingly popular event, Young Wyvern Drinks serves as a gathering for Wyverns 10 years out of College, offering an opportunity for networking.
- **Concerts and Orations:** Cultural events such as performances by the Seraphim Trio and a series of thought-provoking orations, including Indigenous issues and climate change, were well-received.

2024 also saw the successful growth of our **Career Ready Program**, Many Wyverns were generous in offering career advice, internships, and even job opportunities for our residents, ensuring that our students have a strong foundation as they move into the workforce.

As 2024 drew to a close, we said farewell to **Dr. Stewart Gill OAM**, who completed eight years as Master of Queen's College. In January 2025, we welcomed **Dr. Michael Stepniak** as the new Master of Queen's College. Thank you again to the Arch Wyvern and Committee and we look forward to working with you in 2025. At this point, I would like to hand over to **Dr. Stepniak**.

Message from Dr. Michael Stepniak

- Expresses delight to be here.
- Thanks the committee and gives platform to the community already invested. Thanks Nicole's leadership for a number of events that have been well received.
- Expresses his joy to join the community: the warmth of the community meant so much to Anne and Tilda
- Describes himself as an outsider insider of this community as he learns a lot about the community
- Grew up in Melbourne but left 40 years ago for international career
- Dr Edward Sugden's portrait inspires him of Sugden's community principal in which Sugden's wife played a critical role and that it takes family communities to make things work.
- Started as Master at end of January and then had to be in USA for a while and with Nicole's help, tracked down Wyverns in DC area to meet some e.g. Wyvern who works in risk management area/prevention of fraud
- Depth and breadth of Queen's alumni is extraordinary - wherever we go there are Wyverns doing interesting things
- Looks forward to get to know more Wyverns and their experience e.g. Queen's traditions, etc.
- There are some things that need to be strengthened: finances, implementation of rigorous action on sustainability, strengthening of indigenous and first nations people, further advancement of Sugden Institute and Orations (please reach out to Michael if you have anything interesting to share as he works on who to select for speakers in these events).
- Looks forward to working together.

7. Election of Office Bearers and Committee

a. Arch Wyvern: Katie Skillington

Nominated by George Willox, Seconded by Etsegenet Herschmann
Chairperson declared Katie Skillington elected (Section 52(2))

b. Deputy Arch Wyvern: George Willox

Nominated by Katie Skillington, Seconded by Etsegenet Herschmann
Chairperson declared George Willox elected (Section 52(2))

c. Secretary: Lisa Shimano

Nominated by Katie Skillington, Seconded by Etsegenet Herschmann
Chairperson declared Lisa Shimano elected (Section 52(2))

d. Treasurer: Natalie Everett

Nominated by Jessica Attenborough, Seconded by Katie Skillington
Chairperson declared Natalie Everett elected (Section 52(2))

e. Ordinary members:

i. Sally Morris

Self-nominated by Sally Morris, Seconded by Katie Skillington

ii. Sebastian Bombaci

Self-nominated by Sebastian Bombaci, Seconded by George Willox

iii. Etsegenet Herschmann

Self-nominated by Etsegenet Herschmann, Seconded by Jessica Attenborough

iv. Jessica Attenborough

Self-nominated by Jessica Attenborough, Seconded by Etsegenet Herschmann

v. Warrick Brewer

Self-nominated by Warrick Brewer (via email)
Unanimously elected

- vi. Sam Lieberman
Nominated by Jessica Attenborough, Seconded by Etsegenet Herschmann

All nominations are elected (Section 53(2)).

f. Observers

No observers nominated. No observers elected.

If anyone you know is interested, please let Katie or Wyvern Society committee know.

8. Other Business

- **ACTION:** update outdated Wyvern Society page on the website

Meeting closed at 6:31pm