

NOTES TAKEN MEETING HELD 14 JUNE 1979, 8PM AT GARIBALDI'S RILEY STREET EAST SYDNEY

Meeting chaired by Terry Reid and Vivierene Binns:

- Ian Burn: proposed additions to agenda for the meeting -
- report on previous meeting held at Marist Bros school
 - report on meetings taking place elsewhere
- IB:
- The present agenda was a version of that which arose out of the meeting held approximately 6 weeks ago at Marist Bros. People from other states were present at that meeting and agreed to organise meetings in their own states:
 - large meeting week after next in Melbourne. 400 copies of present agenda and notice of meeting have been sent out
 - at the same time a meeting will be held in Adelaide.
 - other meetings are to be held in Tasmania (Hobart) and Perth - details of these are unknown.
 - Brisbane response not known.
- Nigel Lendon: Agenda was also sent to interested people in New Zealand and to people in Brisbane.
- Michiel Dolk: Call for other topics to be included on agenda
- VB: Those will come under 'Any other related matters' - any other business
- VB: Proposed the setting of a time structure for the meeting
- IB: proposed that most time should be given to agenda item (5) Short-term organisation - the form of a steering committee to be discussed, procedure of the steering committee and follow-up meetings
- VB: general agreement to this - ten minutes each to be given to other topics

AGENDA ITEM 1 - THE AIMS OF THE ORGANISATION

- TR : Quoted 1st two items on agenda i.e. Aims .. and General Aims.
- Ian Milliss: These aims are just some ideas from the Marist Bros meeting. Call for other suggestions.
- VB: These ideas are open for discussion and further suggestions.
- TR: Quoted item Policies
Stress item (a) - to establish a communication network
- Ric Bolzan: Are you also looking for a national register of artists?
- ?: As people join the organisation itself would supply the register.
- TR: Do you mean a register of 'services'?
- RB: A register as a resource. ...
- VB: This comes under membership criteria. Re aims: are there any other points for discussions?

- NL: The aims and policies could be worked into a longer list - eg there is not much difference between objectives 1 (a) and (c)....
- Geoff Warmiston: How do you define 'artist'? Do you visualise a comprehensive artists organisation?
- TR: Does anyone have any answers to these questions?
- Merilyn Fairskye: Whereas there is a musicians union and an actors union there is no union for people specifically involved in visual arts - this will be the limitation...
- ?: Suggest a working organisation in this (Darlinghurst) area as a starter and then thinking about a national organisation later.
- VB: A national organisation is already happening. The organisation is not seen as being centralised in Sydney.
- Gary McDougall: A national organisation will depend on the union of smaller organisations - it's too early for national scope.
- IM: It is not the case of any one state taking the lead - state organisations independence is necessary. From my experience in the Sydney art world the small-to-big (thing) just doesn't work. The organisation stays small.
Organisation should be as big as possible from the beginning then people will be more likely to join. There is enough interest in other states and in Sydney for this to happen.
- VB: The National Community Arts Co-op was founded in the same way - people from different states went back, set up organisations there.... the need was there - you can compare the two, there is the same level of need... (the?) organisation develops with communication not a centralised body.
- GW: Quotes introduction to manifesto of Creative Society.
- VB: People interested in the Creative Society should refer to GW.
- GMcD Agree with the earlier comment about a big start. If we are going to have this kind of organisation our priorities must be -
- membership
 - the establishment of an office of resources by which it can communicate - the ability to develop these resources will affect its representativeness.
 - aims should be broad
 - should be a unifying body
 - a body trying to represent artists interests; to persuade Government bureaucracy that this body does this ..
 - the aims should be the basic aims of any union in Australia
(line missing) atmosphere of authority /within the context of lack of involvement
- Peter Callas; 'union' is a bad word – emotive - How is it ('union') defined?
- GMcD: It is a union because people are going beyond individuals to act to better the interests of artists... . readily agreed that the function of a union was the representation of interests - a body to speak for artists as a whole.
- re the Biennale, the fault lay in no union (unified body) with policies to confront (the VAB?) ... without organisations like this they (the VAB) don't know what is wanted.
- IM: The aims should be purely materialistic. Artists organisations factionalise because of competition that develops (over concerns such as exhibitions etc)

If it sticks to things like negotiating with the Visual Arts Board, democratic representation in exhibitions etc. then it can start gaining authority - can put time into membership...
Communications should be about grants, jobs, galleries ... on an operative level .. things which are now only gossip and not hard facts.

- TR: Quotes IB re CARFAC.
..situation where somebody is taken on in a situation like the AGNSW doesn't happen in a situation without communication with artists. Things do not happen at 'rumour' level ... people enter into a real dialogue that has something to do with what is happening.
- Mike Parr: re aims item (c) - distribution of funding. How would this be done? Through negotiations with the VAB by union leadership? Union could determine the amount of funding but how would it determine allocation of funding?
- TR: eg. Biennale - proposals by Sydney and Melbourne artists such as equal space ... it's a matter of responding to each issue as it arises.
- MP: I agree that the present situation with the VAB is not desirable. What would the relationship be between the individual artist and the union?
- NL: That relates to structure: if it is going to be an artist-representative organisation this must be built into the structure.
If it is going to be representative and ensure the democratic allocation of funds as in item (c)..different kinds of artists must have equal representation in the 'heirarchy' or structure.
- Rod Shaw: ..More important to follow up IM's suggestions - that this discussion should come after people have decided the general character of the organisation.
Should not use any euphemisms for union. Artists should make definite demands and should have recognition status.
The definition of an artist is not necessary - an artist is a person who calls himself an artist.
- PC: I think 'union' will alienate people who would otherwise be involved.
- TR: Do many people here find the word 'union' troublesome?
- Tim Lewis: I don't like the idea of a union.
- Betty Kelly: Would like to suggest a title "UNITED ARTISTS UNION OF AUSTRALIA"
- RW: (?) Important to note that the statement of aims and interests will either alienate or attract people.
- GMcD: Name is not vital or important.
Declaration of a union is the declaration of the aims of any union.
I propose we vote on the name and in the process accept the aims of any union in Australia.
- Virginia Hollister: The problem is who will be in it and what are the aims?
The one determines the other. The people who will be involved will have different types of needs and these will affect the aims.
- VB: Suggest vote on name of membership ...
- TR : Aims are an outgrowth...

GW: What aspects of the arts will be encompassed?

Terry Smith: (Related to) what Mike Parr said - A specific thing that this organisation could do - if we did have a strong organisation it could be a way of bringing democracy into the way the Australia Council is organised ..eg AC money is given to 'responsible' organisations like the AGDC, for touring international exhibitions. This is a problematic policy. A question of undemocratic, un-Australian effect of this policy....

Joe Perrone: How will we convince these people? What power do we have?

TS: ... a union without representation on the Australia Council would have artists

RW: Generate publicity?

IM: We will be in a position to embarrass them. Not direct power like the other unions ... the Biennale embarrassed people.
..This organisation (union) would make it easier for them (Aust .Council)

TR: What about the Biennale?

JP: They didn't listen...

IM: Some things did happen...

TR: It set a precedent...

IM: Suggest that those things be included in the aims.
Q: any specific changes (to the aims)?
The artist register should be included

NL: I recommend that one of the jobs of the steering committee be to go over the agenda and ..bring it up more clearly written in future meetings...

VB: The address at this stage for the committee:

Box 309
Wentworth Building
Sydney 2006

Ideas will come up after this meeting -- people can communicate ideas to BOX 309 etc: ...

RW: no 'psychological tactics' - by placing racism and sexism as first priority of aims you are conditioning the way people view this thing...(this must be realised) if you are going to consider 'psychological tactics'...

IM: To formalise things it might be an Idea to move that

- a. this meeting accept those general aims
- b. the steering committee gets together to rewrite and extend policy

TS: Is the first aim as written in the present agenda?

VB: Is this the point to accept the question of a steering committee?

VH: (What about) the sentence about definition of 'artists'? It should be deleted from the aims.

- Robert Irving: I am a composer I am here because I think it should simply be called an artists union...
- WH: I move the acceptance of the general aims as stated in the agenda with the above deletion.
- MD: One extra for Criteria...
re employment (under- or unemployment of artists).
Employment should be a concrete objective of the union - to deal with under- and unemployment
- MP: These general aims are far too vague.
Aims and policies should be linked.
No clear reasons have yet been provided for the function of a union.
- TR: Several Issues are clear - the structure of the Australia Council - employment. I could think of others
- the Marist Bros situation
- Creative spaces (to build up support of non-used spaces...)
- the situation at the Warehouse where they are paying high rents etc..
- TS: A general problem area - one of the aims should be to try and build up a number of places for exhibitions, increase employment,

Aims: possibilities for artists should be built up - most of these aims (in the agenda) tend to describe the situation as it is.
- NL: Could that come under item (b)...?
- GMCD: The priorities of a union are to be based on its aims..
- GW: ..artists guilds in USA (each state)...who use professional lobbyists
- TR: Asks for info on the guilds for file...
- VB: Call for general acceptance of aims,
- MD: On provision that these aims are provisional.
- GW: We should accept the generalised aims...
- TS: I propose we vote as Ian Milliss stated...
- VB: Call for vote.

MOTION CARRIED (as per IM)

AGENDA ITEM 2 - STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANISATION

- TR: Quotes notes on agenda.
- VB: There are a number of things where decisions need to be made
Call for comments on first part (a) ..
- IM: Like the other things, it comes up from the previous meeting at Marist Bros. The reason why other organisations have gone aground - an overload of non art producers...but not the most important reason. The main reason is they have been

taken over by sectional interests - domination by one or other group. Things must be organised so that this does not happen.

- TR: Call for proposals as to how this structure can be arranged.
- RW: Changing 'leader' ...This activity would be overwhelming it would be desirable to make it a changing thing..
- IM: You mean limited tenure..
- RW: 6-monthly or yearly. You are not going to escape - however -the greatness of level of involvement
- TS: I suggest we should talk in the framework of a big enough organisation so that enough money could be raised for someone to be employed to do day-to-day work. The steering committee obviously have to do work (policy etc)...
- RS: From my experience there is no water-tight way of managing to represent all areas.. Suggest a steering committee without a hierarchy but with a permanent chair who could be deposed by the vote of the steering committee. With a steering committee and chair - chance of even-handedness. Ultimately it depends on individual interests to fight for their own interests .
- RB: I would like to second the above. A rotating chair and steering committee seems to be the best way.
- IM: I am also in agreement. With the steering committee less formalised - less break between the committee and other people. Steering committee meetings would be open to anyone who wants to come.
- RS: One thing to be aware of: if this became a union there would be possible legal structures
- RW: ..enquire if anyone is interested to present as...
- MD: I don't think that the two are often necessarily incompatible (Secretary, Treasurer etc. responsible to steering committee)...
- GMCD: Put (the above) into the form of a motion. Elect a short-term steering committee which should be Secretary, Treasurer etc...
- VB: I don't think those jobs should be delegated to one person...
- ?: It's too early for a steering committee in this meeting; it would exclude people ...
- MD: I propose we elect a steering committee here and now.
- VB: There must be a small group in charge of the minutes etc. from this meeting. .. a steering committee to come out of tonight as provisional until next meeting?
- TR: That puts any committee in the position of being a task/work force.
- ?: (what about) the suggestion of ways of electing a committee ..on the agenda.. How representative is this meeting? Are there representative numbers of people here, eg community artists , students ... ?
- GMCD: ...a show of hands to determine ...
- RS. We must start with the people who came...

?: ..we should publicise

VB: Propose the motion that the idea of a steering committee to operate until the next meeting (be accepted)...

GMcD Seconded

VB: **MOTION CARRIED**

BK: How large should this committee be?

Mark K: The steering committee should encourage members of other groups, eg, Creative Space...

MD: ..go on the basis of one art student, one art teacher, one art professional

TR: People involved should offer themselves

MD: ..eventually have sub-committees to cover these areas. What is now needed is a steering committee to operate...

VB: ..decide the size..

RW: What would be the objectives of this committee?

VB: To collate information from this meeting In order to prepare an agenda for the next meeting.

DE: I suggest representation of areas on the steering committee.

NL: I agree.

Peter Thornhill: What about others who are not community artists, gallery artists..?

RW: People should nominate themselves

NI: ..against the idea of just having those people who put their names forward..

GW: I propose enlarged structure of steering committee now, to 'sort itself out' by next meeting.

RB 6 or 8 people?

IM: 6 people Is not broad enough to represent all categories. I propose 10 (8 -12) for this type of committee. A core of 6 with the others...

MD: .. determine what interests we want to have represented?

IM: independent media workers..?

VB: Do we leave it open or define particular areas of representation?

IM: I propose that just this time we leave it open - take nominations or volunteers

RB: I disagree. We have already agreed the rewriting of policy is to be left to the steering committee...

MD: Call for a vote on this..

VB: Call for vote:

1. committee open to volunteers or nominations this time only – or – 2. categories to be selected and representatives chosen.

SHOW OF HANDS – about equal

GMcD: .. a third option...

VB: ..would be to attempt to identify particular areas and then fill In the gaps with volunteers and nominations.

RW: The doubt may be because any decisions are subject to ratification at the next meeting...

NL: That may not be the whole picture... One of the functions of the steering committee might be to write up a report of this meeting, distribute and collate it with records of meetings from other (interstate) meetings.

Julie Ewington: I support the adoption of a representation of interests as in item (ii) (of the agenda) because it will be a long time till the next melting.

GMcD: are there any nominations?

VB: the groups are not yet identified.

JE: I propose extra areas - independent media workers, non-producers... .

GMcD: locking things into roles...

?: Volunteers should nominate their area...

VB: Call for identification of: students, teachers, professional artists, community artists, media workers, non-gallery/ non-community artists...

(show of hands)

BK: I am outside all those areas - art gallery representative...

PT: Rather than talking of individuals, people should represent the attitudes of those involved In education ... should think of what is going to be achieved by these categories ...

GMcD: I propose we call for nominations...

PT: ..conflict between areas of concern eg. teachers and artists...

VB: those conflicts cannot be worked out here

Call for volunteers.

Robert Irving - lecturer SCA, composer

Tim Lewis

Merilyn Fairskye - women artists

David Cabban

Michiel Dolk – community artists

Peter Thornhill - artists not represented ...

IB nomin: IM - accepts

IM nomin: VB - “”

VB nomin: JE - ""
RW nomin: Lyn Leigh - accepts
PT nomin: VH - declines
Rod Shaw
Margot Gray
Loren Sherman

- VB: Call for general agreement on those nominations etc... and that steering committee is to meet after this meeting. Call to proceed with agenda. Structure: anything more to be said? Any indication of "bias" on possibilities..?
- GmcD: Too early to decide these things..
- VB: When?
- GMcD: Next meeting...
- IM: One of the things talked about at the previous meeting..co-ordinate things from other states.. Those possibilities are more recommendations. It would be an idea to sound out responses to those .. not final decisions.. the idea would be to get a rough consensus from the NSW meeting.
- NL: (Line missing)
- IM: The only question to be decided is (that of) a national centralized or a federated organisation. ..as decisions have already been made on a steering committee and sectional interests...
- NL: re structure - relationship with New Zealand.. propose that we liaise with New Zealand artists without proposing a multinational artists union.
- PT: What gives New Zealand any special criteria to be involved?
- MD: ..some NZ artists present at previous meeting...
- MD: .. aboriginal artists should be considered. .
- VB: re a national or federated organisation ..show of hands? discussion?
- GW: Don't consider this yet.
- TR it's a question of airing ideas now.
- GMcD: One problem that's going to arise is the production of a national newsletter - where printed, distribution..
- VB: The idea is to get a feeling of general..
- Virginia Spate: I support the proposal for a federated organisation. At the present stage (one) shouldn't formalise the national organisation...
- TR: Seconded.
(show of hands)
- VB: DONE
- RW: One of the aims should be the formation of a National body.
- IM: That is not necessary. All other states will accept this as national.

IB: other meetings are going on.

VB: We should state our intentions...

VB: (there's?) difference between groups operating in each state or having a federated body (ie. centralised)

MD: I suggest/support the idea of a federated organisation but with a federal (national) committee - for instance in dealings with the Australia council.

VB: Sometimes there would be a body with representatives from each state..

IM: I agree, but that does not have to be decided yet. For example, unions with their independent state branches and a federal executive.

VB: ..the general feeling at this stage is for a federated organisation with some committee which unites people from the states but has no power over state bodies.

VS: ..should emphasise communication on a national level in the aims..

VB: Call for any other comments on structure.

(none)

AGENDA ITEM 3 - CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP.

VS: I propose two categories:. 1. art producers. 2. non art producers (associate membership)

?: ..define those terms?..

VS: ..self-defining.. There will be situations where a conflict of interests arises – this distinction must be made.

GMCD: Associate membership would be a useful category in order to have members sympathetic to ..and willing to contribute.

TR: An artists register could be one way of defining this situation.

GW: ..there are people who do not work in the system at all..

TR: ..they are included already.

IB: ..propose we see if there is a general acceptance of those two categories

TR: ..how does non art producers..

VS: ..the complexities are enormous in situations..

MD: I don't think (that) is difficult to deal with. Suggest – sub-committees be formed to detail proposals on the possibilities for something like that. You are dealing with a whole category of interests, that are quite wide. At this moment the problem is not very pressing. If the organisation would eventually be a union ..it would become more pressing

BK: Sub-committees are not necessary with a steering committee

RI: Leave this until the next meeting.

VB: Are there any other comments?

AGENDA ITEM 4 – FUNDING

VB: Read item from agenda
Call for discussion

IB: If people are talking about a national meeting in 3 – 4 months time then money will be needed.

Propose a grant to cover this from the VAB.

VS: This organisation should not be dependent on grants..

VB: I suggest there be a sort of...

VS: The publication seems to be the most important..

NL: I was going to ask you (IB) – is the cost of a publication included in a grant, or a larger scheme such as a pilot study – co-ordination of state organisations, publicising of the venture?

GW: (fee structure)

GMcD: suggest we take a collection

IB: \$55.56 available from last meeting

VB: What do we see the collection as covering?

VH: newsletter plus mailing.

RW: relevant point: I went to see the president of the Mackie SRC - proposed that the Red Herring initiative should be pursued by financing publication re artists union etc. She was sympathetic to the idea of financing an initial publication. We could presume finance via Mackie. The publication is important.

TR: A second possibility: follow-up in Melbourne on the initiative of Preston students.

IB: In the first publication we can only publish a report of this meeting along with reports of meetings in other states, and distribute it widely...

VS: Suggest republish IB article on CARFAC to give ideas, also guild in the states, to get some idea that this (kind of Organisation) does function.

MD: There are several other models, eg. UK artists union, fairly (devoted to?) sectional interests; also Holland and Germany – long history of artists unions.

VB: Call for forwarding of this kind of information.

NL: To return to this meeting...to decide in principle for applying for grants (as above).
Leave it to the steering committee to canvass funding possibilities.

IM: ..agree with danger of depending on grants. but for this organisation to work it must get off to a solid start and needs large amount of money ... so we must go to the VAB

Meeting agrees in principle to accepting grants.

TL: Call for donations.

IM: \$55 for interstate...onus is on us to put together something – another collection.
(donations called for)

VB: Is there any other business?

IB: Next meeting, when, where?

VB: Fees? Any discussion?

RB: Related to fees, the steering committee should find out what legal obligations would be – can fees be charged?

GMcD: The steering committee should come up with an idea of fees.

VB: steering committee is to look into legal aspects and give an idea of fees...

?: Please decide a date.

VB: Any other comments on fees?

RB: Fees can't be charged yet.

VB: Next – to decide date for next general meeting.

GMcD: One other thing – it would be a good idea for someone to draft a press release.

NL: re Susannah Short – press release not agreed upon. What she writes about this meeting could be damaging. Suggest someone contact her and check...

BK: She can write what she wants..

NL: ..we could exert pressure...

GMcD: Press release should be an embodiment of the 5 motions passed. Leave the press release to the steering committee to do this...

VB: There are two issues here –
a. the Susannah Short article to reflect this meeting...
b. separate press release should be formulated.

(Short to ring Julie Ewington)

VB: I take it that the steering committee should prepare the press release?

RW: Should we give them guidelines?

VB: Decide the date for the next meeting?

IB: Propose meeting to be held after reports of other meetings have been published (4 to 6 weeks)

IM: should the steering committee decide a date?

VB: decide now.

IB: ..meetings in Melbourne and Adelaide in two weeks' time.. Give them 4 weeks.

JE: what about the VAB submission?

IM: The steering committee must be empowered to negotiate with the VAB .. the submission date for grants is mid-July.

VB: Settle for 5 weeks hence –
19 July, Thursday – at Garibaldi's, 8 pm

VB: I propose it be agreed that the steering committee approach the VAB..?

AGREED