# 2025 Annual General Meeting Minutes

**Date and Time:** Nov 29, 2025 13:00 GMT+11 AEDT (VIC)

**Location:** Google Meet (not recorded)

## In attendance

Voting Members:

- Alec Gardner
- Andrew Roffey
- Andrew Scott
- Andrew Shipton
- Arne Buchholz
- Ben McEvoy
- Brenda Van Benthem (arrived later)
- Ebtesam Gauda
- Gillian Dempsey
- Ian Christofis
- Jodie Hunter
- John Pane
- John Shaba
- Khairil Zhafri
- Kiki Fong Lim
- Kirsten Frederiksen
- Michael Vander Donk
- Paul Ruberry
- Perryn Fowler (arrived later)
- Raj Balaguru
- Robert Lo Giudice
- Sorawit McHugh
- Steve Sainsbury
- Warren McHugh

Observers:

- Alexar Pendashteh (attended initial portion of meeting)

## Acknowledgement of Country

The meeting was opened at 1:02pm by the Chair John Pane. The chair welcomed all attendees, asked that they identify themselves in the chat and note their status as member or observer.

The Chair gave an Acknowledgement of Country and invited meeting attendees to make acknowledgements in the meeting chat.

## 1. Confirmation of previous minutes

The Chair shared details of how the meeting would be run, including that attendees were to place any questions or votes in the meeting chat, and to be respectful of each other. The meeting agenda was shared, highlighting that there was a section at the end for questions.

Andrew Scott shared in the chat that three proxy nominations had been received for the AGM meeting, two assigned to the Chair, and one to Kiki Fong Lim.

**Motion:** that the meeting approve the minutes of the annual general meeting held on 16 November 2024 as a true and correct record of that meeting

**Moved:** John Pane
**Seconded:** Paul Ruberry
**For:**

- Andrew Roffey
- Arne Buchholz
- Ian Christofis
- Jodie Hunter
- John Shaba
- Khairil Zhafri
- Paul Ruberry
- Paul Ruberry
- Raj Balaguru
- Robert Lo Giudice
- Sorawit McHugh
- Steve Sainsbury
- Warren McHugh

**Abstain:**

- Andrew Scott
- Andrew Shipton
- Ben McEvoy
- Gillian Dempsey
- John Pane
- Kiki Fong Lim
- Kirsten Frederiksen

**Motion passed.**

## 2. Reports from the board

### Chair's Report

John Pane thanked previous board members over 2024/2025, and acknowledged that the board size had reduced since the start of the year.

John shared that the strategic plan had three elements: 1. Governance & Operational Uplift, 2. Raising EFA's profile in the community/industry/government, 3. Re-planning

On Governance & Operational Uplift, John shared that there is a need to improve resourcing & work allocation, and this will help with other aspects. Financial management was seen to be sound, and this is confirmed by annual audits.

On Raising EFA's profile in the community/industry/government, it has been positive. Both membership/community engagement and collaborations have been increasing.

On Replanning, completion of strategic planning hasn't been fully completed, and some elements of the annual plan have not been achieved.

Success markers for EFA show that EFA is attracting older, male members but there is a wish to broaden appeal to younger people, women, and those from vulnerable communities. More positively, EFA has been increasing awareness of digital rights, and has been lobbying the government extensively in key policy areas. It is hard to tell for sure if EFA is helping increase access to rights-preserving technologies. Media mentions and advocacy opportunities have clearly improved ("gone through the roof").

Focus areas in 2025 were the Privacy Act review, drawing attention to data breach implications such as that of Qantas, the social media ban, AI and AI safety, encryption, age/identity verification (linked to social media ban, but also the digital ID bill), and workplace surveillance.

John shared a month by month review of EFA's activities across submissions/policy, participation/outreach, and governance.

John talked about collaborations across the year with the likes of DRW, APF and Australians against AI. There were continuing relationships with Choice, ACCAN, QUT, TIO, and TPDi. John stated that there would be benefits from re-establishing strong relationships with the Australian Internet Governance community.

John shared that membership numbers have been steadily growing over recent years, although the membership composition is largely life members. On donations, EFA received grants from companies around 2021/2022, but have dropped since then. John flagged that broader fundraising could be tackled by the new board.

Media requests and appearance have been strong, especially for an organisation of our size. John shared there has been a 25% increase in LinkedIn followers recently, and had 118k views on Facebook in the past 12 months. Media appearances have occurred across TV, radio, print/digital, and even international publications, collectively representing about 80 mentions, compared with 32 in the previous year. EFA is considered a trusted source of information by the media, and there is an opportunity to convert this recognition into memberships.

As outgoing chair, John proposed 2026 areas of focus for EFA could be: (i) simplification of strategy, reporting and admin, (ii) supporting members and membership engagement

through more focus and further uplift of systems, (iii) mobilisation of volunteers, (iv) further increase of fundraising in the form of sponsorships and grants, and (v) continuing to grow EFA's brand.

**Motion:** That the meeting accept the 2025 Chair's Report

**Moved:** John Pane
**Seconded:** Andrew Scott
**For:**

- Alec Gardner
- Andrew Roffey
- Andrew Scott
- Andrew Shipton
- Arne Buchholz
- Ben McEvoy
- Ebtesam Gauda
- Ian Christofis
- Jodie Hunter
- John Shaba
- Khairil Zhafri
- Kiki Fong Lim
- Kirsten Frederiksen
- Michael Vander Donk
- Paul Ruberry
- Perryn Fowler
- Raj Balaguru
- Robert Lo Giudice
- Sorawit McHugh
- Steve Sainsbury
- Warren McHugh

Abstain:

- Gillian Dempsey
- John Pane
- Kiki Fong Lim (proxy)

**Motion passed.**

## Treasurer's report / Annual financial statements

John Pane shared that Shaun Branden had a conflict with the AGM, so has been authorised to present the annual financial statements to 30 June on his behalf.

There was a small loss of $3,616 this year compared with the loss of $6,442 last year. Current liabilities have reduced since last year. Membership subscriptions are largely the same as the previous year, while donations have increased slightly.

In August this year, EFA received a letter from the ATO claiming a tax expense of $15,113 relating to the year FY 2018. We have written to the auditor to clarify that we don't admit any debt, and have corresponded with the ATO and await their response. The auditor has advised that EFA should record this in the EFA 2026 financials until the matter is resolved.

Gillian Dempsey proposed that the auditor be advised that the 2025 accounts should include the contingent liability in the 2025 financial statements, and include a note to the effect that we do not admit to this debt.

John Pane offered the text of a motion: "Subject to the Board requiring Arabon Assurance to amending the 2025 financial year return to explicitly note the ATO contingent liability of $15,113.37, that the meeting accept the financial statements and auditor's report for FY 2025 as a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation."

The members at the AGM discussed this. Paul Ruberry noted that the auditor may not agree with this.

**Motion:** Subject to the Board requiring Arabon Assurance to amend the 2025 financial year return to explicitly record as an accounting line item the ATO contingent liability of $15,113.37, that the meeting accept the financial statements and auditor's report for FY 2025 as a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation
**Moved:** John Pane
**Seconded:** Gillian Dempsey
**For:**

- Alec Gardner
- Andrew Roffey
- Andrew Scott
- Andrew Shipton
- Brenda Van Benthem
- Ebtesam Gauda
- Gillian Dempsey
- Ian Christofis
- Jodie Hunter
- John Shaba
- Khairil Zhafri
- Kiki Fong Lim
- Kirsten Frederiksen

- Perryn Fowler
- Raj Balaguru

Abstain:

- Arne Buchholz
- Ben McEvoy
- John Pane
- Khairil Zhafri
- Kiki Fong Lim (proxy)
- Paul Ruberry
- Sorawit McHugh
- Steve Sainsbury
- Warren McHugh

**Motion passed.**

## 3. Appointment of auditor

**Motion:** that the EFA board appoint Arabon Audit & Assurance as its auditors for FY 2026.
**Moved:** John Pane
**Seconded:** Paul Ruberry
**For:**

- Alec Gardner
- Andrew Roffey
- Andrew Shipton
- Arne Buchholz
- Ben McEvoy
- Brenda Van Benthem
- Ebtesam Gauda
- Gillian Dempsey
- Ian Christofis
- Jodie Hunter
- Kiki Fong Lim (and proxy)
- Kirsten Frederiksen
- Paul Ruberry
- Perryn Fowler
- Raj Balaguru
- Sorawit McHugh
- Steve Sainsbury
- Warren McHugh

**Abstain:**

- John Pane
- Khairil Zhafri

**Motion passed.**

## 4. Election of Board Members

Andrew Scott thanked everyone who nominated for the board. There were 16 candidates nominated for 7 open positions. During the election 61 votes were cast.

Andrew congratulated the successful candidates:

- Brenda Van Benthem
- Gillian Dempsey
- Julian Watchorn
- Kirsten Frederiksen
- Perryn Fowler
- Shaun Branden
- Warren McHugh

John Pane also congratulated the new board members. John shared that people who were not successful in this election would be welcome to volunteer in other capacities.

## 5. Questions and Other Business

### Meeting closed

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 2:15pm AEDT