



AGM 2017 Report

Volunteers in Attendance:

Tessa Barratt, Joseph Salemi, Miya Yamanouchi, Johanna Phommachanh, Erin Warwick, Epiphanie Bloom, Sarah de Jongh, Brianna Attard, Alex Blandino, Jess Corban, Juliana Vanegas, Michelle Imison

Venue: The Newtown Women's Library

Date and Time: December 14th 2017, 7.30pm

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Good evening everyone and welcome to this year's annual general meeting.

My name is Tessa Barratt and I am the founder of the Sydney Feminists, a small but highly active nonprofit educational organisation

For those of you unfamiliar with the Sydney Feminists' history, we were founded as a Meetup group in 2012. Initially it was just me and my co-founder Joseph Salemi, holding small, quiet dinners at various locations around Sydney with the intent of meeting like-minded individuals. Then we acquired a licence to screen an educational documentary about the misogyny inherent in modern day media. We started to screen this for free at public venues around Sydney and slowly gathered a small following. Before long, we had other dedicated volunteers joining us in our mission to educate as many people as possible about feminism and its necessary role in Australian society. Over the years, the Sydney Feminists has hosted a wide range of events: documentary screenings, panel events, talks, fundraisers, workshops and more. Our primary focus has been on media education and we have a substantial library of eye-opening documentary films which we have screened publicly for free and which we have taken into universities.

Today, the organisation is a thriving, incorporated not for profit with over 25 volunteers and a growing base of paid members. Although we are a small, grassroots operation, we have been highly successful at raising awareness and disseminating important information and educational material to schools, institutions and networks within both the City of Sydney and around the world.

This year, the organisation enjoyed growth across all of its social media platforms, its membership base and its volunteer base. We successfully hosted four documentary

screenings and five social dinners. We also held a vibrant and successful fundraiser at the Red Rattler in June when Yale University's all-female a cappella group graced us with their singing and thoroughly entertained all involved. All our documentary screenings were held at the Newtown Women's library, to whom we are very grateful for the space. In previous years, the screenings attracted around 20 to 30 people. However, this year they have been very popular and we have had up to 45 people attending. Most encouraging, we have seen high school students coming on their own volition. We're pleased with how well word has spread about our films and are also thankful to the social media team for helping to promote these events.

As for socials, they have been held at various restaurants in different parts of the city so as to be accessible to as many people as possible. My warm thanks to Joanna and Michelle who have helped me host these socials throughout the year. While documentary screenings educate, the socials provide a space for feminists to talk freely among like-minded individuals. This may not sound like much, but many of the women I have spoken to are surrounded by people who do not approve of their belief in women's rights and empowerment and so are much relieved to be able to go to a gathering of women and men who are interested in, and actively fighting for gender equality. It has been important to provide a safe space for women to discuss their ideas and to network with others.

Along with our public screenings and dinners, the Sydney Feminists has also been going into schools and a correctional facility to deliver targeted workshops for young people. In January, Miya, Kim and Joseph created and presented a respectful relationships workshop to a group of teenage boys in a correctional facility in Western Sydney. While they were warned that the boys could be challenging and difficult, they not only held their own, but actively engaged with the boys. The boys even asked if they would come back. The workshop was a fantastic success and led to a follow-up session at a school for young people with behavioural problems. There Miya and Joe delivered another presentation on cyber bullying which was again well received. Later in the year, the youth group CORE invited the Sydney Feminists to present a workshop on beauty ideals to a group of refugee girls and young women. After soliciting research material from our highly knowledgeable team members, Miya was able to compile a fantastic and engaging program for the girls. Reports of the workshops can be found on the Sydney Feminists website for those who are interested in learning more. In summary, they were very well received by both educators and children, and furthered our goal of educating young people about feminist issues.

Continuing with our goal of awareness-raising, the Sydney Feminists has also given numerous interviews to university students, media outlets and high school students working on their personal interest projects. Our core team of volunteers has been very helpful here, in particular Jess and Miya.

As mentioned earlier, we hosted a successful fundraiser in June which, along with membership fees, donations and merchandise sales has increased the organization's funds. I will now hand over to Joseph Salemi for the official treasurer's report.

Treasurer's report:

INCOMINGS	
Membership	\$ 219.94
Merchandise	\$ 331.50
Donations	\$ 2,189.75
Bank	\$ 13.42
Ticket Sales	\$ 1,100.50

OUTGOINGS	
Website	\$ 222.54
Women's Library	\$ 100.00
MeetUp	\$ 114.33
Merchandise	\$ 180.22
Fundraising Expenses	\$ 491.99
Documentaries	\$ 339.14
Incorporation	\$ 44.18
Office	\$ 295.68
Banking	\$ 91.86

Total Incomings	\$ 3,855.11
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Total Outgoings	\$ 1,879.94
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Previous Balance End 2016	\$ 591.95
Balance End 2017	\$ 2,567.12

I would like to finish up with a brief rundown of our impressively active social media platforms, starting with the Blogger.

Blogger:

Blogger has enjoyed considerable growth this year. We're averaging 2 articles a month, with a steady increase to one post a week. We have had 27 pieces up this year, as opposed to last year's 9. Views have increased as well, from just a few dozen to up to 500 for our most popular article. Matthew Healy's regular monthly contributions in the form of the Women in Film History series has been a boon the blog as it keeps it active and consistent. We have also had several guest posts from women around the world, from India to Hungary. Recently, two women, Rachael and Tee, applied to be regular blog posters and have been consistent in their submissions, which have been of high quality and very interesting. We have also done 2 book reviews on the site this year, courtesy of Linda and Tee, and may do more in the future.

Tumblr:

The Tumblr contains 1728 posts in total with over 100 followers. We have no dedicated Tumblr poster at present. Our previous Tumblr poster, Elizabeth, did a good job of maintaining the platform throughout the year by reblogging content from other Tumblrs. However, she was relieved of this role and the Tumblr has been suspended, as the intent of the platform was to be a venue for original content. This is how it started and, as TSF is about education, we would like to get back to using Tumblr for this purpose. We will continue to advertise for a dedicated writer who can focus on trending topics within feminism and pop culture analysis.

Twitter:

Managed by both me and Johanna, the Twitter has gained around 100 new followers this year, bringing the total to over 1700 followers. That averages to approximately 10 followers a month, with 1141 profile visits in January 2017, with our next busiest month in September at over 780 profile visits. We receive numerous mentions and mostly friendly replies and communications. Twitter is a slow growing platform, but continues to be a useful voice and tool for the organisation.

Instagram: (Miya to read her own report)

This year has been a huge year for Instagram. We almost doubled in followers since December, going from 10 thousand followers at the end of 2016 to just under 20 thousand as of now.

We've gained three more incredible and consistent contributors, who post amazing and impassioned content regularly and with vigor. They are angry and they are determined and they are hungry for change and it shows in the posts they make and the love they have for the feminist cause.

We have also retained an amazing contributor from last year, Jo, who posts less frequently and when she wants to (which is exactly what I like because it's when they are inspired to voice something that their posts are most impactful). Her posts are always detailed, beautifully expressed and say so much.

Each of our admins who we are blessed to have on the team engage with our followers and have a unique voice that our followers connect with and resonate with. Our followers love our admins and our admins love our followers.

We have also gained an Instagram vlogger who's each video is viewed at least 1000 times, with her most viewed vlog being viewed just under 2000 times. Alex's vlogs

create wonderful, interesting and meaningful discussions and it is never a small feat to be "the face" of a feminist organization. Putting yourself out there in a very visible way, whilst simultaneously speaking out about issues that are often quite unpopular and definitely unwelcome to most, especially to internet trolls is in itself an act of great courage, empowerment and revolt, particularly when we as women are taught to "be quiet", "stop complaining" and "just smile and look pretty".

My team is beautiful, talented, creative and passionate and I feel so very very blessed to have each of them on board. I'm thankful for every post they make and I am moved and humbled by their dedication and desire to actively bring about social change through awareness and activism. Our team are change makers and their voices are loud.

Facebook:

We currently have 1528 likes and over 1500 followers on Facebook. While not our most active platform, we have a few dedicated posters that keep it relevant. It has also been a useful advertising tool for our events and a good way to connect with, and share the events and causes of other women's groups. The page has been well maintained and posts carefully considered. This means that the platform tends to generate positive feedback from followers.

Meetup:

Meetup has gained around 100 new followers this year and enjoyed much growth. We now have 450 members. The platform has been used to advertise our social dinners as well as our other events. In total, Meetup has hosted 199 events, including 17 this year. Participation was highest during the first half of the year, but has waned in the second half. Still, on the whole, it has been a good year of membership growth for the platform.

YouTube:

Our channel currently has 93 subscribers. 11 videos were uploaded just this year, bringing the total to 35. Our most popular upload was a guest vlog by a young woman, Tiana, speaking openly about her bisexuality (385 views) followed by Hungarian feminist Dorka's accounts on beauty ideals and eating disorders, and 15 year old Eloise's open discussion on what it means to be a feminist in Australia today. These videos came as a result of an on-going campaign from Miya, using the Instagram to encourage women to tell their stories in the form of vlogs. It has been encouraging to

see such a diversity of experiences and has touched the hearts of viewers, resulting in the platform's rapid growth in subscribers.

Website:

The Sydney Feminists website has not only received a makeover this year, but has expanded in content. We have several new webpages, and have added an introductory video to the main page, courtesy of Khusi, a 2-person team of young, Spanish documentary filmmakers. Johanna has been the primary caretaker of the website and has kept it up to date, frequently posting up events and campaigns, both from The Sydney Feminists and other women's groups. Both Miya and I have also helped with maintenance. Our chief researcher, Brianna Attard, has recently contributed an excellent piece of academic research on Toxic Masculinity, which has been added to our Research and Information page. The website contains several high-grade academic papers on various feminist subjects with the intent of benefitting students and scholars alike. Brianna's latest piece compliments the workshops directed at boys and young men. On the whole, the website is working well as both a store of information and as a portal for students and would-be volunteers to learn about what we do and how they can reach out to us.

In closing, I am pleased to state that the Sydney Feminists has had an exceptional year and has greatly increased its reach and educational output. Through a combination of online and hands-on approaches, we have informed and educated many people. It is our hope that we have also inspired others to learn more about feminism and actively participate in the movement.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers. I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your commitment to this cause and for all your contributions throughout the year. Volunteer work is often thankless and there are so many people doing amazing and important work without any recognition. Tonight, I recognise you all and thank you for all that you have done and continue to do. It is hard to measure success when operating in this way; however, I can assure you that all your work has an impact on a great many people both here in Australia and around the world. Indeed, the Sydney Feminists has fostered strong global connections with many women's groups and activists the world over. Together, we are making a positive difference for women and girls, and yes boys and men too, in working towards a brighter and more egalitarian future.

When I founded this group, it was my firm belief that education was the best tool for change, and I still believe that. So to every volunteer who has worked for and in this organisation, I thank you for sharing this vision with me and for working towards this goal. We cannot and could not have done it without you.

I would especially like to thank our current and former committee for their tireless work in keeping this non-profit going. Few see the enormous amount of background work the committee does to keep the cogs turning. Administration and management are not the fun parts of feminist activism, but they are necessary, and without the committee to do this work and direct the focus of the organisation, nothing would get done. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Johanna, Miya and Joseph for their amazing work, their wisdom and guidance, their passion and drive and generosity. Thanks to your input and dedication, the Sydney Feminists has not only survived another year, but thrived during it. On behalf of the organisation, please accept this token of appreciation.

PRESENT CERTIFICATES AND GIFTS

And to the rest of our recurring and dedicated team of volunteers who are here tonight, I would like to thank you with a certificate of appreciation. I would like to call up: Erin, Epiphanie, Brianna, Alex, Jess, Michelle and Linda.

This concludes this year's reports. It is now time for the committee to stand down and for the new committee to be formed. I would like to hand over to my co-founder, Joseph, to conduct this part of the meeting.

New committee is sworn in.

Now that the new committee has been formed, I can officially conclude this year's annual general meeting. The minutes of this meeting will be made available in the next few days, along with the report. The Sydney Feminists will be shutting down its administration from 15 December until 14 January. The new committee will meet in early January to decide our focus and what projects to take on in 2018.

For those of you would like to stick around, we will be having a small after party. Please feel free to join us.

Thank you all for coming tonight. Your participation in this important meeting is greatly appreciated. We hope you have an enjoyable festive season and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.