

**29th Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday 8th August 2023 12.00pm AEST

Via Zoom Teleconference:

**Minutes**

Meeting opened at 12.00pm

**PRESENT:**

| Ria Subrahmanyan  Mandi Smith  Shane Smith  Greg Daniels  Anneliese Alexander  Mary Brown  Cynthia Nathan  Carolyn Fryday  Jennifer Mason  Mohammed Al-Zoubi  Rosa Trovato  Gina Salvagno | **Accepted but did not attend:**  Ravendra Sharma  Karen Quah  Vicki Childs  Muhammad Irfan  Zoe Everington  Cate Noy  David Walpole-Sinnamon  Viera Stark  Gamze McGrath  Anne Mitchell  Nick Foord  Susan Brooks  John Ledbetter  Marlene Quijada |
| --- | --- |
| **APOLOGIES:**  Amanda Lambros  Carolyn Mallam |  |

Minute taker: Shane Smith

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Ria Subrahmanyan, MAREAA Vice President and Shane Smith MAREAA Secretary, welcomed everyone to the MAREAA 29th AGM.

1. **Opening Address and Presidents’ Report**

Ria Subrahmanyan, MAREAA Vice President, presented the President Report (Refer to appendix A) on behalf of Amanda Lambos, President MAREAA

1. **Minutes of 28th AGM 2022**

Accepted by **Ria Subrahmanyan** and seconded by **Mary Brown**.

1. **Financial Reports**

Presented by **Mandi Smith**. Refer P&L and Balance Sheet presented.

P&L: In the 2023 Financial year the association made a loss of $525.91

Income was $1,455 (Membership fees - Stripe fees $45.50)

Expenses were $7,728.30 (NSW MAREAA Conf) all covered by fees except for $1,070.30

Balanced Sheet:

Net Assets $10,442.44, current year earning $-525.91

Savings $10,442.44 less GST Payable of $809.56

Finances accepted by **Ria Subrahmanyan** and seconded by **Greg Daniel**.

**Action**: Investigate AASW (Australian Association of Social Workers) **Mandi Smith**

1. **State Branch Reports**

NSW – Shane Smith (Appendix B)  
  
165 Members:

* 52 Organisational members.
* 13 Individual members
* 98 Expired and
* 2 Retired.

WA – Ria Subrahmanyan (Verbal)

QLD – N/A

VIC – Mary Brown.   
  
**Action**: Connect with Victoria mailing list and gage interest in future events, **Shane Smith**

SA – N/A.

NT – N/A.

1. **MAREAA Award for Excellence in Marriage and Relationship Education**

**Action**: No nominations… discuss at the next committee meeting **Ria/Shane**

1. **National Committee** 2023/2024

**All positions declared vacant:**

* Acknowledgement of State Branch Representative appointments
* Election of Management Committee office bearers   
  (President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary)
* Election of ordinary members  
  (committee members other than State Branch Representatives and office bearers)

**State branches:**

* **Mary Brown**, VIC Representative  
  Accepted by Shane Smith and seconded by Mandi Smith
* **Rosa Trovato**, VIC Representative  
  Accepted by Shane Smith and seconded by Mandi Smith
* QLD Representative  
  No nominations
* **Ria Subrahmanyan** – WA Representative  
  No additional nominations
* SA/NT Representative  
  No nominations
* TAS Representative  
  No nominations

**National Committee:**

* **President** - Amanda Lambros (Re-elected)
* **Vice president** - Ria Subrahmanyan (Re-elected)
* **Secretary** - Shane Smith (Re-elected)
* **Treasurer** - Mandi Smith (Re-elected)

Accepted by **Mary Brown** and seconded by **Jennifer Mason**

1. **Election of ordinary members**

An ordinary member is far from ordinary. An ordinary member can sit on the committee and hold an important role in supporting the objectives of the association.  
  
No nominations.

1. **Any Other Business**.
2. Nil.

Shane Smith closed AGM at 12.30pm

**Appendix A:**

**MAREAA**

**Presidents Report**

**AGM – 29th** It is my honour and privilege to present the annual report of the Marriage and Relationship Educators of Australia Association (MAREAA) for the year 2022-2023. This report highlights the significant achievements, challenges, and milestones we have experienced in our mission to support educators who, in turn, support couples and foster healthy relationships.

**Overview:**

Throughout 2022-2023, MAREAA has continued its commitment to promoting healthy relationships, offering valuable resources, and advocating for evidence-based practices in relationship education. Our dedicated team of professionals has worked tirelessly to enrich the lives of individuals and couples across Australia.

**Membership Growth:**

We are delighted to report a steady increase in membership during the past year. Our association has welcomed numerous new educators, researchers, counsellors, and allied professionals to our community. This growth allows us to expand our reach and offer greater support to those in need.

**Professional Development:**

MAREAA has remained committed to empowering our members with the latest research, best practices, and skills. In 2022-2023, we organized several workshops, webinars, and a very successful conference, which provided valuable opportunities for our members to enhance their expertise and knowledge. We extend our gratitude to all the presenters and attendees for making these events enriching and engaging. A special mention to Mani & Shane Smith who made the conference extra special with care and attention to detail and all the time and effort they placed into creating a wonderful event.

**Public Outreach and Awareness:**

Our association has continued to champion the cause of healthy relationships by engaging in public awareness campaigns. Through various social media channels, which has only just begun and will continue to grow into the 2023-2024 year and community events, we have highlighted the importance of relationship education and seeking professional support when needed. These efforts aim to reduce the stigma around seeking help and encourage individuals and couples to prioritize their emotional well-being.

**Collaborative Partnerships:**

MAREAA has not actively sought partnerships in the 2022-2023 year however this will be a large focus for the 2023-2024 year. By actively seeking collaboration with like-minded organizations and institutions, we aim to forge partnerships with universities, research centres, and other associations to strengthen our collective impact in promoting healthy relationships and family well-being. These partnerships have enriched our resources and expertise, allowing us to offer a wider array of support services.

**Resources and Publications:**

In 2022-2023, we continued to provide our members with an array of valuable resources and publications. Our website has been regularly updated with insightful articles, research findings, and tools to assist educators in their work with couples. We appreciate the efforts of our content contributors for their dedication to providing high-quality materials to our community. I would like to make a special mention to Ria for her outstanding contributions to the website as well as a special mention to Shane for his ongoing support and contributions to the blogs and member newsletters.

**Challenges:**

Despite the accomplishments, we acknowledge that we faced some challenges throughout the year. The ongoing pandemic brought unforeseen disruptions, impacting our ability to conduct in-person events and engage with our members face-to-face as much as we would have liked. However, we quickly adapted to virtual platforms and continued our efforts to serve the community through online channels and will continue to do this in the coming months to continue to grow the membership and educational reach.

**Future Outlook:**

Looking ahead, we are committed to further expanding our reach, refining our offerings, and nurturing an inclusive and supportive community. We will continue to advocate for the significance of relationship education and invest in the professional development of our members. MAREAA remains dedicated to staying at the forefront of relationship education, adapting to emerging trends, and supporting the changing needs of couples and families.

We will be attending the upcoming Australian Counselling Association (ACA) conference and have a display table to become better known in the counselling profession and encourage new membership.

In conclusion, I extend my deepest appreciation to the dedicated members, volunteers, and the executive committee for their unwavering commitment and hard work throughout the year. Together, we have achieved significant progress and made a positive impact on countless relationships.

Thank you for your continued support and trust in MAREAA. We look forward to your valuable feedback and active participation in the coming year.

Sincerely,

**Amanda Lambros**

[info@amandalambros.com](mailto:info@amandalambros.com)

**National President**

Marriage and Relationship Educators Association of Australia (MAREAA)

**Appendix B:**

**MAREAA**

**NSW State Report**

**AGM – 8th September 2022**

NSW MAREAA is back and in stride.

Shane Smith, Mandi Smith, Cynthia Nathan, Nick Foord and Carolyn Mallon ran a MAREAA NSW conference in March 2023.

MAREAA NSW CONFERENCE 2023: RELATIONSHIP KNOWLEDGE, SHARED AND SQUARED. KATOOMBA, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY 30-31 MARCH

25 attendees

* *Relationship Roles and Incongruence – Mandi Smith*
* *New views on Love – Selfless or Selfish ?’ - Nick Foord*
* *“Aren’t All Marriages Cross-Cultural?” – Carolyn Mallam*
* *Being Vulnerable - Sharing, withholding, hiding and hoarding thoughts and feelings - Shane Smith*

<https://www.mareaa.asn.au/mareaapd>

Mandi and Shane have led a **Marriage Mentor, Family Life Skills Relationship Education Program pilot program through the Sydney Anglican Diocese** since early 2021. Designed to reinvigorate an Anglicare Led training and mentoring approach with Churches to increase Anglicare’s connection with Church and Community Partners, the program set out to develop marriage mentors, who would then work in their churches to provide relationship strengthening courses and activities. Using the PREPARE-ENRICH program, Shane and Mandi trained 7 couples and are continuing to provide mentoring support.

**Better Marriages Conference**, 3 September 2022. Held in Kiama, this one-day couples events included Robyn Donnelly as the keynote speaker. Titled ‘Sticking together when the world is pulling us apart’, Robyn brought in research that helped couples and families stay connected, (focussing particularly on John Gottman’s work), Robyn introduced research to assist couples to strengthen their relationship and for them to share it with others. <https://youtu.be/S8n8EI5epGk>.

The next **Better Marriages Conference** is on at Engadine Anglican Church on

Engage, Excite, Energise: Growing your marriage through the stages of life

Saturday 9 September 2023. [Engage, Excite, Energise: Growing your Marriage through the Stages of Life](https://bettermarriages.org.au/events/engage-excite-energise-growing-your-marriage-through-the-stages-of-life/).

**Mandi Smith** has been working with Victoria University and the Sir Zelman Cowen Centre in partnership with Benevolence Australia, to support the [**'Good Beginnings**](https://www.vu.edu.au/sir-zelman-cowen-centre/community-outreach-programs/good-beginnings-pre-marriage-mentoring-for-muslim-couples#:~:text=A%20collaborative%20learning%20model%3A%20using,sessions%20with%20engaged%20Muslim%20couples.)**’** program, using prepare-enrich, a collaboratively developed pre-marriage mentoring resource for Muslim couples. The program works to create opportunities for conversations with Muslim pre-marriage couples about how to build respectful relationships and strong marriages when they are at the beginning of their journeys together. It is a world first primary prevention program funded by the Department of Social Services (Community-led Projects to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children – 4-DPV4EVR) to address the gendered drivers of violence against women using OurWatch’s primary prevention framework ’Change the Story’.

Shane Smith

**Secretary**

Marriage and Relationship Educators Association of Australia (MAREAA)