

The National President's 2019 Annual Report

By Jeff Allen, National President of the Electric Energy Society of Australia

This report sets out the activities and achievements of EESA during the 2019 year, and the National Council's plans for EESA in 2020.

In summary, 2019 was a very eventful year for the EESA National Council with changes to the membership of the council, an update of the EESA constitution which was subsequently approved by EESA members and a recent National election for some positions on the 2020 EESA National Council as per the new updated constitution.

EESA members had access to an even greater range of CPD events in 2019 thanks to the efforts of our volunteers at the various chapter committees across Australia. The following paragraphs give you a taste of the activities undertaken by EESA in 2019 and our plans for 2020.

The 2019 National Council

We started the year 2019 with a face-to-face meeting of the "2018 National Council" in Sydney on 26th November 2018. One of the main items of business at this meeting was to receive the results of the recently completed "national election". This was the first time such an election had been held. The result that was announced by the Executive Officer was challenged by a member of the 2018 National Council and following discussion it was realized that the original count included the vote of "non fee-paying students" and it was agreed that there should be a recount.

Following this recount, the makeup of the **2019 National Council** was:

- Jeff Allen (NSW/ACT)
- Robert Barr (NSW/ACT) – National President
- Kim Boyd (Queensland)
- Chris Dalitz - immediate past President
- Russell Ellen (WA)
- Natalie Hutchinson (Vic)
- Larry Meng -Treasurer - appointed by the Council
- Clare Paynter (SA/NT)
- Martyn Pearce (SA/NT) – invited on to the council as as a non-voting member
- Aditi Sachdeva (Vic)
- Farhad Shahniah (WA) – invited on to the council as a voting member
- Michael Verrier (Tas)
- Penelope Lyons – secretary – non-voting

Unfortunately, within a few months there were five resignations from the National Council as follows: Clare Paynter (Tuesday 26 February 2019), Chris Dalitz (Wednesday 27 February 2019), Natalie Hutchinson, Aditi Sachdeva and Farhad Shahniah (Friday 8 March 2019).

On 2 May 2019, Robert Barr stepped down as National President and I was elected to the role.

Abrar Aziz, the Victorian chapter chair was invited onto the national council in late May and Natalie Hutchinson and Aditi Sachdeva re-joined the National Council meetings from June.

List of 2019 National Council Meetings

The National Council met on the following occasions to discuss various items of business

- 26 November 2018 - a face-to-face meeting in Sydney
- 14 December 2018 - Teleconference
- 5 March 2019 – Teleconference
- 2 May 2019 – face-to-face meeting in Melbourne
- 24 June 2019 – Teleconference
- 8 July 2019 – Teleconference
- 4 September 2019 – Special General Meeting (some members of the National Council) at Huntingwood NSW
- 5 September 2019 – Teleconference
- 8 October 2019 – Teleconference
- 11 November 2019 – Teleconference
- 25 November 2019 - a face-to-face meeting in Sydney

Review of the EESA Constitution

The 2019 national council decided to proceed with updating of the EESA constitution to ensure that it better reflected the voting needs/representation of the members of EESA and to remove any doubts re the validity of who is eligible to stand for election and who can vote.

A working party was formed for the review. Two representatives from all chapters were invited to participate. The working party members had discussions with and gained feedback from their respective chapter committees. Many ideas and suggestions were forthcoming and these were then synthesised at the many working party (teleconference) meetings into a set of agreed reforms as follows:

- Re-defining member classifications, fees, rights and obligations, voting and ability to stand for office as well as the creation of a “Concession” membership category.
- The make-up of the national council to be based on chapter chairs (or a representative as agreed by the chapter committee), three nationally elected members (with two elected during the planned three-year term of an elected president), a Young Professional member, a National Treasurer (three-year term), Past President (one year only, non-voting) and Secretary (non-voting). Corresponding members (non-voting) to be appointed by the national council for identified specific roles as required.
- The President is to be elected by incoming council (before the selection of Treasurer and Young Professional) for a three-year term and may then serve a further three-year term (having gained re-election to national council) with a maximum term of six years.
- The Honorary Treasurer position is filled from nominations called during the national election period, appointed by the national council for a three-year term (and may seek re-nomination).
- In addition, the need was identified for developing procedures for inclusion in the constitution for dispute resolution procedures, and protection for the privacy of member data held by EESA.

On Wednesday 4 September 2019 the updated constitution was adopted by a vote of eligible members via an online ballot, of which the numbers were added to a vote held at a Special General Meeting (SGM) of EESA members held in Western Sydney (following a Seminar at Endeavour Energy’s offices). The updated constitution was then registered with the NSW Department of Fair Trading.

Many thanks to Martyn Pearce and members of the working group for all the work in updating the constitution.

Strategy, Business Plan and Budget for EESA

Our 2019 Business Plan was reviewed and adopted by the National Council at the teleconference meeting on Monday 24th June. The business plan focused on improvements in the areas of Members, Financial Performance (National as well as State chapters), our internal business processes and the roles and responsibilities of the people involved in supporting EESA activities.

Membership

The 2019 business plan focused on a number of initiatives in the member area. These included improving membership focus, ensuring membership renewal and looking for new members, particularly corporate members. We also saw that we needed to improve member communication and raise the profile of EESA.

As at November 2019, the EESA membership base was distributed according to the table below:

Membership Categories	Queensland	NSW/ACT	Victoria	Tasmania	SA/NT	WA	Total
Corporate	5	9	5	1	1	2	23
Individual	197	174	95	13	82	78	639
Student	42	38	76	1	33	41	231
Total	244	221	176	15	116	121	893

EESA Member Events

A total of 81 events were offered to EESA members across Australia in the past year (from Nov '18 until Nov '19). Our relationships with other organizations allowed EESA members access to 26 related events in addition to the 55 directly arranged by EESA.

EESA Events during "2019"								
Categories	Queensland	NSW/ACT	Victoria	Tasmania	SA/NT	WA	Others	Total
Seminars	11	6	4	1	6	7	16	51
Webinars	0	6	3	0	0	0	10	19
1 day events	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Other events	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	7
EECON	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	12	15	10	2	6	10	26	81

Financial

The business plan aimed to improve the focus on income and expenditure by all members of the committee by regular monthly reviews of income and expenses and the “balance sheet”. The EESA remains healthy financially with almost \$600,000 in assets as at 30th June 2019.

EESA Finances – 2018/19 (as at 30th June 2019)	\$ Amount
Annual revenue in 2018/19 (EX GST)	\$186,412
Annual expenses in 2018/19 (EX GST)	\$195,316
Annual Profit/Loss in 2018/19 (EX GST)	-\$8,904
Total Assets	\$592,825

Larry Meng has continued as National Treasurer and his work is invaluable and very much appreciated.

Member Communication

The business plan aimed to improve the focus on members and their needs. These initiatives included timely information updates for members, good webinar content, good seminar content and good bulletin content.

The “Bulletin” is now produced monthly and the new format and the content has received positive feedback from members. The turnaround time to produce the Bulletin has improved. Thanks go to Terry Miller, Patrick McMullan and Tony Patterson (from the NSW/ACT Chapter) for producing great Bulletin content each month.

The “What's on at EESA - Events Alert” is produced in between Bulletins to promote EESA events to members.

Direct “Mail Outs” are also produced as required to announce events to members.

In the Social Media area, there has been greater use of LinkedIn and Facebook to promote EESA and its various events – but more is required.

Thanks go to our Executive Officer Penelope Lyons for all her great work in the production of the Bulletin and the timely communications of events etc. to EESA members.

Voting for the popularly elected members of the “2020” National Council

On 23rd October 2019 Nominations were called to fill the following positions:

- Three popularly elected positions as a Member of the EESA National Council
- One appointed position as Young Professional Member of the EESA National Council
- One appointed position as Honorary Treasurer of the EESA National Council

Three eligible nominations were received for three vacant positions, which meant that no vote was required. The 3 successful nominees were Natalie Hutchinson (Vic chapter), Tom Bammann (SA/NT Chapter) and myself - Jeff Allen (NSW/ACT Chapter). The successful nomination for the Young Professional Member was Aditi Sachdeva (Vic) Larry Meng (NSW) for Honorary Treasurer.

All the Chapter Chairs are members of the National Council.

The 2020 National council held its first meeting at 7 pm on Monday 25th November and I was elected as National President (for a 3-year term).

Plans for 2020

The members (or their representatives) of the 2020 National Council met on 25th November and updated the EESA business plan with various initiatives and improvements as summarized in the following areas:

Membership

- move to 30th June annual membership renewal.
- Survey members to determine their views on the current EESA services and where they would like to see changes.
- Target a 50% increase in student and individual membership numbers in 2020 over 2019 figures.
- Spread the “reach” of EESA by reviewing the types of businesses and their staff that could be interested in EESA membership.

Student members

- The "University Liaison Coordinator" to work in conjunction with Chapters to establish EESA Campus Coordinators for each University.
- Utilise "virtual poster papers" competitions on the EESA website and LinkedIn and promote these via Universities to engage with students.
- Promotion of prizes/scholarships for university students by each Chapter.
- Offer volunteering opportunities for students for chapter Seminars and “conferences”.
- EESA chapters to host an annual (orientation day?) barbeque to encourage students to join EESA.

Individual Members

- Follow up of non-members who have attended webinars, seminars and annual conferences and offer incentives to join (e.g. discount to attend EECON or local 1-day events, access to past conference recordings, conference papers etc).
- Seek nominations for selected members moving to the Fellow grade.
- Target particular topics for webinars and seminars that are of major interest to members (from survey results).

Corporate Members

- Regular communication with all corporate member companies by Chapter Chairs and President.
- Work with corporate members to set up site visits, on site seminars or webinars regarding their products and services but preferably presented by a customer.
- Facilitate Industry Working Groups in particular subject areas with the support of participant organisations as corporate members of EESA.

EESA Website Replacement

- Establish a Website Working Group (WWG) with National Council Member (Tom Bammann) as chair and representatives from all chapters.
- Determine website functional needs, budget requirements and timeline.
- Commence the process for procuring an “off the shelf solution” that meets EESA needs.

Member Communication

- Greater use of social media for promotion of EESA, events and membership benefits.
- Regular communication with members & potential members through the use of 5-minute videos (published weekly) on LinkedIn, Facebook and EESA website to generate interest in EESA and EESA events.
- Events to be published in What's On (to be issued 2 weekly), the EESA Bulletin (Issued monthly), mail outs and the EESA Website, LinkedIn and Facebook.

- Encourage all members and chapters to contribute articles to the monthly bulletin.
- Cross promotion of events with partner organizations such as API, CIGRE, CIRED, EA etc.

Financial

- Set annual budgets for National and Individual Chapters.
- Allocate budget for Website Upgrade in 2020/21.
- Track and report income and expenditure on a monthly basis for National and All Chapters.

Events

- Explore opportunities for webinars to be arranged by Corporate members but preferably presented by one of their clients.
- Develop an annual national webinar program in consultation with Chapters.
- Seek suggestions from members re potential webinar subjects and presenters.
- Facilitate the live streaming/recording of all (1 to 2 hr.) seminars arranged by EESA.
- Arrange “debates/discussions” between say 2 experts in a particular subject area and have a facilitator control this as a webinar.
- Undertake webinars on “fundamental topics” – e.g. “Protection 101” as a resource on the website for students and young members.
- Ensure EECON is highly regarded and relevant - and profitable.
- EECON 2020 to be in Sydney with EECON 2021 in Perth and EECON 2022 in Brisbane.

National Council

- Review whether EESA should continue to be registered with the NSW Dept. of Fair Trading or should be registered with ASIC (as an incorporated association).
- Develop/update appropriate policies and procedures.
- Finalize a suitable Affiliation Agreement with Engineers Australia.
- Create/define/allocate National Council roles and responsibilities for key activities.
- Adopt, communicate and follow a set of "Values and Behaviors" for all EESA members.
- Implement appropriate induction training for new National Council and State Chapter committee members.
- Conduct “Effective National Council meetings” using Zoom meetings (say monthly) with 2 face to face meetings per annum.

Conclusion

The “2019” National Council oversaw quite a number of changes in 2019 with the members of the National Council contributing significantly to the improvement to the ongoing operations of EESA at both the National and State chapter levels.

The update of the EESA Constitution to better reflect the governance needs of EESA has been a significant achievement in 2019 – and thank you to all those who contributed to the update.

EESA members have been updated on the many changes occurring in the electric energy area by the many detailed articles that have appeared in the EESA Bulletin each month as well as the many webinars, seminars, training events and conferences that have been organized by EESA chapters and our affiliate organizations.

A big thank you to all who have been involved in making all this happen in 2019.

Our plans for 2020 indicate even more improvements for the benefit of EESA members across Australia.