

Convergence 2002

Business Meeting – 10 June 2002

Additional Business

Ian Nichols will move:

That this Business Meeting recommends that all future Australian National Science Fiction Conventions be held over the Easter weekend.

Site Selection for the 2004 National SF Con

Bid 1: Canberra Natcon 2004

Dates: 23-26 April 2004 (Anzac Day weekend)

Venue: Chifley Hotel

Convenor: Vanessa Jacobsen

Committee: Dea Matthews, Richard Womack, Michael Kraaz, Novak, Rose Mitchell,
Greg Toohey

Bid 2: Perth – Chronopolis – Swancon 29

Dates: 8-12 April 2004 (Easter weekend)

Venue: Perth

Convenor: Shay Telfer

Committee: Lily Chrywenstrom (Secretary), Jeremy Byrne (Treasurer)

Jack R Herman
Chair
Business Meeting

Minutes of the Australian Nation Science Fiction Convention (Natcon) Business Meeting

Held on the 15 April 2001

Present: David Cake (Chair), Rohan Wallace (Minutes Secretary) and other members of the Natcon
The meeting was declared open at 12:10pm.

The chair clarified that proxies were not acceptable and that the conbook was wrong in saying that they were.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Correction: p5 "year 200" replaced with "year 2000"

Motion: To accept the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record of the proceedings

Moved: Jeremy G Byrne Seconded: Russell B Farr

CARRIED

Procedural Motion: To move the reports on the 2000 and 2001 Ditmars to the second item of special business after the selection of the 2003 natcon site.

There was a short debate on the procedural motion. The members providing the reports had other business to attend.

CARRIED

Selection of the Nation Science Fiction Convention for 2003

The only nomination received was from Brett Griggs, convenor of SwanCon 2003.

Brett spoke to his bid. Questions were asked and answered.

Motion: To accept SwanCon 2003 as the Natcon for 2003.

Moved: Peter Kelly Seconded: Russell B Farr

CARRIED

Report on the 2000 and 2001 Australian Science Fiction Awards (Ditmars)

Simon Oxwell provided an oral report for 2000. He said that the new rules were useful and workable.

He commented that some questions were raised regarding the categories of awards. In particular it was difficult determining whether the novella and short story category applied. He also commented that the categories were somewhat literary-centric.

A question was raised as to whether the fan categories were adequate.

Simon was thanked for his report.

Mark Bivens provided a report for 2001. A typed report would be made available.

In summary, he raised the following points:

- Improved communication was needed between the award sub-committee and publications and electronic communication co-ordinators of the concom.
- The awards sub-com. needs to take a more active role
- Nominations need to be made available earlier and dispersed widely
- Some initial confusion over the number of nominations required for the professional categories (ie 4) compared to the fan categories (ie 2), but the rules did specify the difference.
- There needs to be flexibility in determining the eligibility for determining the category a work falls within
- The best collected work category needs clarification
- It was suggested that a collected work be a multi-volume work produced over a period of time having a single editor.
- There were difficulties in getting hold of a nomination form
- 43 nomination forms were received by the deadline
- No questions were asked regarding the publication date of a work or the Australian residency status of an author of a work
- Putting the rules on the back of the nomination form was a good idea and should be continued.
- The ability to combine the short story and novella categories into one was used and worked well.
- It was suggested that Fanzine and Best Fan production should be separated into two categories. About half of the nominations received for the combined categories for Fanzines, with the other half being for Fan productions
- It was further suggested that if there were not enough nominations for the split categories then they could be folded together for that year
- 35 ballots were received, 6 by mail, 29 handed in
- The voting system of optional proportional representation (OPR) work well
- No criticisms of the ballot or voting process were received
- It was suggested that a minimum of 2 weeks should be provided for posting the proposed ballot and the actual ballot to allow for feedback on eligibility of works. The proposed ballot would be placed on the web and distributed widely to the usual suspects.
- It was suggested that the nomination form be available by 1 Jan each year
- Generally the rules were effective, but need some fine tuning
- It was noted that the Best Professional Achievement category received insufficient eligible nominated works and thus insufficient nominations

Motion: Thanks be given to Mark for with work on the 2001 Awards and his detailed report.

Moved: Luigi Cantoni Seconded: Jeremy G Byrne

CARRIED

Motions on Notice

A motion on notice was received:

1. That a preliminary Standing Committee of the Business Meeting of the Australian National SF Convention be appointed, comprising not less than five and not more than eleven persons, and they shall hold office until the close of the Business Meeting at Convergence in 2002 ("the 2002 Meeting").
2. That the Committee shall include, without requirement of election, the chair of the current National Convention.
3. That the Committee shall be involved in the administration, promotion and development of all aspects of the National Convention which are unique to its National status, including the Australian SF Achievement "Ditmar" Awards, the organisation of the Business Meetings and the country-wide nature of its promotions, and that the Meeting further detail specific responsibilities as it sees fit.
4. That the Committee liaise closely with the Convention Committee and that these committees act cooperatively to achieve their respective aims.
5. That the Committee, during the intervening period, act in such a way as to allow the Committee to report back to the 2002 Meeting about the success of their preliminary administration, and provide a more complete model for the ongoing work of the Committee on the basis of their experience. (It is envisaged that such reports be presented in writing in sufficient time to incorporate them into the convention materials for Convergence.)
6. That the 2002 Meeting assess the value and relevance of the Committee based on its reports and make a determination at that time about the continuation of the Committee structure.

Moved: Rohan Wallace Seconded: Peter Kelly

A question was raised about when a constitution amendment takes effect, and in particular the constitution amendment made earlier at this meeting.

The chair ruled that the change takes effect as soon as the motion is carried and is minuted.

A procedural motion of dissent in the chair was received.

A point of order was raised regarding which standing orders the natcon business meeting runs under.

It was submitted from the floor that the standing orders of the ALP National Conference are used.

The meeting was adjourned to attempt to find a set of the relevant standing orders.

The meeting recommenced. Said copy of the standing orders was not found.

The chair was handed to Rohan Wallace.

The acting chair ruled that if the dissent motion is carried, then the alternative ruling is substituted for the chair's ruling.

The alternative ruling offered by Stephen Boucher is that the constitutional change takes effect at the close of the meeting.

David Cake spoke against the dissent motion, stating that once carried a motion take effect.

It was noted that under the standing orders of the ALP National Conference, a motion of dissent in the chair is permitted, with the vice-chair (taken to be the secretary) holding the chair while the former chair and mover only are allowed to debate the motion of dissent.

However with the indulgence of the meeting Jeremy Byrne was allowed to speak. He stated that he wanted the constitutional change to take effect at the end of the meeting so as to avoid the need to provide the rules for the standing committee at this meeting, but that an ad-hoc committee could be set up by the meeting to, in effect, conduct the running of the Ditmars and business meeting.

The motion of dissent in the chair was put and CARRIED.

As such the constitutional change passed by the meeting does not take effect until the end of the meeting.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

The amendment was electronically circulated and published in the conbook.

The proposed amendment was:

That a clause be added to the Constitution before the current clause (iv) such that it would become (v), to read as follows:

(iv) The Business Meeting of each Australian SF Convention will appoint a Standing Committee to assist the Convention Committee in the administration of certain aspects of the Convention which are other than year-to-year, as detailed in rules made under this Constitution. These rules will be amendable by resolution of a Business Meeting, and changes will take effect at the next Convention.

Moved: Jeremy G Byrne Seconded: Nick Evans

Jeremy spoke to the motion. The idea was to provide a standing committee to look after non year to year matters. The standing committee was not to be a rival to the convention committee nor intrude into the organisation of a natcon. It was a less controversial alteration than the previously proposed Natcon body.

Stephen Boucher spoke against the motion. The amendment embedded in the constitution something that was effectively an experiment. Such a committee could be established without the need for constitutional change.

Jeremy responded that proposal was designed to be a consensus approach to the concerned previously raised at the last natcon and that he believed that the committee would be persistence and thus needed to be in the constitution.

Procedural Motion: That the meeting move into committee to discuss the proposal. CARRIED

Debate ensued. The minutes secretary noted that he was not attempting to minute the debate in committee. However, it is noteworthy that comments were raised regarding whether there was too much flexibility provided to make rules governing the standing committee that can be changed by a business meeting, with the need to put forward notice of change to the rules. It was also noted that amendment could not be made to the motion because of the notice requirements, so the proposal has to be accepted as is or not accepted at all. There was general agreement on the idea of a standing committee looking after the Ditmars, and the business meeting. There was disagreement on the need for constitutional change and whether the proposed change allowed for abuse.

The meeting moved out of committee.

The mover and seconded proposed to withdraw the motion, as it was appeared to them that it did not have clear support.

The chair ruled that the motion was now the property of the meeting and thus needed unanimous consent to be withdrawn.

There was discussion on why the motion should be withdrawn.

The chair asked if there were any objection to the withdrawal of the motion. One objection was noted by Peter Kelly.

The chair rules that the motion could not be withdrawn, as there was not unanimous consent.

Peter then spoke in favour of the motion. He said the constitutional change showed a commitment to the standing committee and that there had been enough discussion, it was time to do something.

Jeremy spoke against his motion. He believed that as there was not a clear majority of support for the change, even though there was fore clear support for the principle, he believed it would do harm to the idea if it were implemented in the current form.

Tara Smith stated that she thought it was a good idea, but that it needed a minor change. She wished it noted that Jeremy should not feel as though the idea was rejected.

The motion was then put. CARRIED

The chair was returned to David Cake.

The meeting moved into committee to discuss foreshadowed amendments to the motion on notice.

The meeting then moved out of committee.

The foreshadowed amendments were accepted by the mover and seconder and thus incorporated into the motion, which now read:

- That a preliminary Standing Committee of the Business Meeting of the Australian National SF Convention be appointed, comprising not less than five and not more than eleven persons, and they shall hold office until the close of the Business Meeting at Convergence in 2002 ("the 2002 Meeting").
- That the Committee shall include, the chairs of the sitting National Conventions.
- That the Committee shall be involved in the administration, of all aspects of the Australian SF "Ditmar" Awards and other awards, and the organisation of the Business Meetings.
- That the Committee liaise closely with the Convention Committees and that these committees act cooperatively.

The motion was put.

CARRIED without dissent.

The next motion on notice was considered.

Motion: That the previously tabled proposal for the establishment of a national organisation for the Australian National Science Fiction Convention and Australian Science Fiction Awards be laid on the table.

Moved: Rohan Wallace Seconded: Jeremy G Byrne

It was noted that last years business meeting resolved to consider a proposal for the establishment of a national organisation for the Australian National Science Fiction Convention and the Australian Science Fiction Awards and that the 2001 Natcon committee circulate this proposal as an agenda item in its publications. The proposal tabled at the 2000 Natcon business meeting was widely circulated soon after the 2000 Natcon.

It has become clear to the proposers after national debate that there was doubt that such an organisation was needed. Therefore, at the present time, the proposers wish to lay said proposal on the table for an indefinite period.

The motion was put.

CARRIED without dissent.

Report on the minutes of the 1999 Natcon

The chair delivered a report stating that Marc Ortlieb was contacted regarding said minutes. He said that the minutes were not available and recommended that he be censured.

Motion: That the chair of the 1999 Natcon business meeting be censured and spanked for not ensuring production of the 1999 Natcon business meeting minutes.

Moved: Ian Nicholls Seconded: Catherine DeCroy

CARRIED unanimously

No volunteers were forthcoming for spanking Marc.

General Business

Appointment of the previously resolved standing committee

Ex-officio members:

David Cake, Rose Mitchell, Brett Griggs

Proposed members:

Marc Ortlieb, Nick Evans, Russell B Farr, Jack Herman.

Motion: That the aforementioned proposed members be appointed to the standing committee.

Moved: Rohan Wallace Seconded: Jeremy G Byrne

CARRIED without dissent.

Motion: That the 2002 Natcon chair have the power to co-opt other people to the standing committee.

Moved: Stephen Boucher Seconded: Tara Smith

CARRIED

Rose Mitchell made an undertaking to convene the first meeting of the standing committee.

Australian SF Awards

After review of the reports previously tabled, it was proposed to split the combined Fanzine and Fan Production category.

Motion: That the Rules for the Australian Science Fiction ("Ditmar") Awards be amended as follows:

- At the end of the paragraph headed Fan Categories, under the heading Categories, the following be added "Best Fanzine"
- The last sentence of the paragraph headed Fan Production under the heading Eligibility Criteria, be deleted;
- A new paragraph headed Fanzine be added after the paragraph headed Fan Production under the heading Eligibility Criteria as follows: "Fanzine: This award is for work in any medium first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The writer or artist must have received no payment. Eligible works include, but are not limited to, a periodical, journal, ezine or webzine."; and
- At the end of the paragraph heading Minimum finalists for categories, under the heading Final Ballot, a sentence be added as follows: "At the committee's discretion, eligible finalists in the Fanzine and Fan Production categories may be merged into a single category called Fan Production."

Moved: Tara Smith Seconded: Neil Murray

CARRIED

The Meeting was then closed at 3:10pm

Rules for the Australian Science Fiction ("Ditmar") Awards

1.0 Preamble

1.1 The Australian Science Fiction ("Ditmar") Awards recognise excellence in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror by Australians.

2.0 Categories

2.1 **Professional Categories:** Best Novel; Best Novella or Novelette; Best Short Story; Best Collected Work; Best Artwork.

2.2 **Fan Categories:** Best Fan Writer; Best Fan Artist; Best Fan Production; Best Fanzine.

2.3 **Special Award for works not eligible in existing categories:** Best Professional Achievement; Best Fan Achievement; William Atheling Jr Award for Criticism or Review; Best New Talent.

3.0 Eligibility Criteria

3.1 **Timeliness:** Works are eligible if they were first published or released anywhere in the world in an edition dated in the calendar year immediately preceding the year the award is held.

3.2 **Australianness:** Nominees are eligible if they were Australian citizens or permanent residents in the year their nominated work was released.

3.3 **Eligibility of committee members:** Members of the current Convention Committee will be ineligible for any award, unless the committee appoints a wholly autonomous subcommittee to administer the awards, in which case only the subcommittee will be ineligible.

3.4 **Novel:** A Novel is any work of sf/f/h of more than 40,000 words.

3.5 **Novella or Novelette:** A Novella or Novelette is any work of sf/f/h of 7,500 to 40,000 words.

3.6 **Short Story:** A Short Story is any work of sf/f/h less than 7,500 words.

3.7 **Collected Work:** A collected work is a sf/f/h collection or anthology, magazine or journal, ezine or webzine which must pay contributors in other than contributor copies and incidentals, or is sponsored by an institution other than a fan club, or whose editors declare themselves to be professional. At least one edition of a collected work must have been issued in the eligible calendar year.

3.7 **Best Artwork:** An artwork is a single work or series of related works of art in any medium other than text.

3.8 **Fan Writer and Fan Artist:** These awards are made to writers or artists for a work or body of work first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The writer or artist must have received no payment other than contributor copies and other incidentals (coffee mug, t-shirt, poster, etc.)

3.9 **Fan Production:** This award is for work in any medium first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The author or artist must have received no payment.

3.10 **Fanzine:** This award is for work in any medium first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The writer or artist must have received no payment. Eligible works include, but are not limited to, a periodical, journal, ezine or webzine

3.11 **Special Awards:** Special awards recognise outstanding achievements in science fiction fantasy, or horror not eligible in the existing categories.

3.12 **The William Atheling Jr Award:** The William Atheling Jr Award is for the writing or editing of criticism or review pertaining to the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

3.13 Best New Talent: The Best New Talent award recognises excellence of professional achievement in any field of the genre by an individual who has not been nominated for a professional award three or more years before the year the award is held. An individual is only eligible for two consecutive years.

4.0 Nomination Process

4.1 Eligible nominators and voters: Nominations will be accepted only from natural persons active in fandom, or from full or supporting members of the national convention of the year of the award. Where a nominator may not be known to the Awards subcommittee, the nominator should provide the name of someone known to the subcommittee who can vouch for the nominator's eligibility. Votes will be accepted only from full members or supporting members of the convention

4.2 Nominations: The nomination may nominate any number of works in any category. However, the nominator may nominate any given work only once in a category. All nominations must include the name of the nominator. Where a nominated mark does not meet the criteria for its nominated category, the committee may move the nomination to the appropriate category; or where a work does not meet any criteria, refuse the nomination.

5.0 Final Ballot

5.1 Number of finalists: The five nominees with the most nominations shall appear on the final ballot. In the event of a tie for fifth place, up to seven finalists may appear on the final ballot. In the event of a four-way tie (or more) for fifth place, only the top four finalists shall appear on the ballot.

5.2 Minimum nominations for finalists: To appear on the ballot a finalist must attract a minimum of four nominations in the Professional and Best New Talent categories, or two in the Fan and Special Awards categories (including Professional Special Award and William Atheling Jr Award).

5.3 Minimum finalists for categories: If any category has two or fewer eligible finalists, the category shall not appear on the final ballot excepting the Fan Awards, the Special Awards and the Best New Talent Award. At the committee's discretion, eligible finalists in the Novella or Novelette and Short Story categories may be merged into a single category called Short Fiction. At the committee's discretion, eligible finalists in the Fanzine and Fan Production categories may be merged into a single category called Fan Production.

5.4 Order of finalists: Finalists shall appear in randomised order.

5.5 No Award: "No Award" shall appear last on the ballot for all categories.

6.0 Voting

6.1 Preferential Voting: Voting in each category shall take place according to a preferential system.

6.2 Tied Winners: In the event of a tie for winner in any category, all tied works will be deemed to have won the award.

6.3 Anonymous Voting: Unlike the nominations, final votes shall be anonymous. However, all ballots shall be coded and sent to each eligible member. The committee member responsible for coding the ballots shall not be involved in counting the votes.

7.0 The Physical Nature of the Trophy

7.1 Finalist Certificates: All finalists shall receive an A4 certificate honouring their achievement.

7.2 The Trophy: Ditmar winners shall receive a standard trophy.

8.0 Appendix: Possible Future Changes

Future amendments to this document were foreshadowed at the Natcon Business Meeting of 26 April 2000.

8.1 Formalisation of Nomination and Voting Periods: It is foreshadowed that formal rules should be laid down directing the Ditmar committee to issue nomination forms and final ballots in a timely fashion.

8.2 Withdrawal from Consideration: It is foreshadowed that formal rules should be put in place to direct the Ditmar committee in its response to requests by authors, artists, editors, or publishers, that a work be withdrawn from consideration.

8.3 List of Eligible Works: It is foreshadowed that the nomination forms may be accompanied by a list of eligible works and that the list may be published on the Web prior to the close of nominations.

8.4 Contraction of Short Fiction Categories: It is foreshadowed that the current rules that allow committee discretion in contracting the professional short fiction categories be amended to provide firm criteria for the merging (eg. if fewer than two works are eligible for the final ballot in either the Short Story or Novella/ Novelette categories).

8.5 The Physical Nature of the Trophy: It is foreshadowed that in future Ditmar awards, the trophies shall be of a physical form that is constant from year to year. The design shall be in the proportions of 1:4:9 (the proportions of the monolith in 2001) and shall include a motif of the Southern Cross. One possibility is to use the popular Lewis Morley design.