

**From Gerlinde Scholz
President of Renew.**

Monday, 7 December 2020

Dear Fellow Members of Renew,

Renew's 2020 Annual General Meeting is coming up on Thursday this week, 10 December, and I would like to encourage you to participate.

For the first time, we are using an online format this year. This offers the opportunity for the meeting to be a truly national event, enabling members who live outside Melbourne to engage. In spite of the challenges of 2020, there is good news to share about Renew, and for many of you this will be the first opportunity to hear from our new CEO Paul Bowers.

In addition, we also have an important item of Special Business on the agenda for members to consider. Some members have called for the removal of four current Board members, myself included.

Like many of you, I am disappointed that our fellow members have chosen this adversarial way to voice their opposition to changes that have been made at Renew in the course of this year. That said, our organisation's Constitution allows for this form of protest. It is essential for good governance that we all respect the Constitution and deal with the matter accordingly.

Decisions will be made on Thursday about how the Board is constituted in 2021 and this will impact on the direction of change at Renew. Strong member engagement is essential for ensuring that these decisions are understood as legitimate by all stakeholders so that the Board, however constituted after the AGM, can put the organisation on a path to rebuilding relationships and working better together into the future.

Over its 40-year history, ATA/Renew has worked to create a 'community of change' to inspire, enable and support behaviour change towards sustainable living at household level. For this important work to make a difference at the systemic level, Renew needs to scale up and vastly increase its membership, reach and impact. It will only be able to do that from a sound financial foundation.

My Board colleagues and I have responded to the Special Business in some detail, which you can review as part of the AGM papers. Though this is not really about facts, figures, or finance. It is about what each of us believe is 'in the best interests of the organisation' and the values that underlie those views.

I believe that most of you, like me, joined Renew because you care about sustainable living and will be glad to see Renew taking a more sustainable approach to managing itself. Member interaction with the Renew office since the meeting notice was published also suggests that many of you do not care to see differences of opinion being turned into AGM business.

Renew's work is more important than factional argument. Responsible budget management does not equal commercialism and corporatism. Starvation signals neither credibility nor virtue. We are a membership organisation and always will be, and a commitment to being financially secure is not at odds with that. If we can get past polarising this as a "them" and "us" identity issue and work through it together, we can secure a sustainable future for Renew and for Australia.

I warmly encourage you to engage with the AGM, whether in person or via a proxy, to make sure you have a voice in the future of your sustainability organisation.

If you would like to get in touch ahead of the AGM, [feel free to contact me via LinkedIn](#).

With best wishes,

Gerlinde

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