

OPAL ASSOCIATION INC  
AGM 2023  
3 AUGUST 2023 AT 730 AM  
MANTRA AT SHARKS

MEETING OPEN

Paul declared the meeting open at 735 am

PRESENT

Paul Sedawie  
Edmund Lahoud  
George Christianos  
Ruth Benjamin-Thomas  
Damien Cody  
Wayne Sedawie  
Sam Manis  
Chris Gawthorpe  
Sally Patel  
Stephen Ellerman  
Estella Sedawie  
John MacDonald  
Ted Hamilton  
Ross Sedawie

APOLOGIES

Natassa Patel

TREASURERS REPORT

Opening balance                      \$32,050.44

Income                                      \$600

PayPal                                        \$13,907.45

Expenses

Sponsorship Winton                      \$1500

Site management                         \$1400

Insurance                                  \$579.70

N Patel opal test                         \$2186.25

Bank balance \$26'984.49 plus PayPal \$13907.45 total \$40 891.94

Opal Association has been very quiet the last three years through the pandemic and a membership of around 65 three years ago has dropped off to around 20. There is renewed interest brought about by the certification function though.

## OFFICEBEARERS NOMINATIONS

PRESIDENT Paul Sedawie  
VICE-PRESIDENT Ruth Benjamin-Thomas  
TREASURER Sally Patel  
SECRETARY George Christianos  
PUBLICITY OFFICER Edmond Lahoud

Any further nominations ? None received.

Paul moved that we accept all the nominations for each position.

Wayne Sedawie

All voted in agreement.

JAA in Sydney asked for somebody to represent the Opal Association at the JAA AGM (held coinciding with the JIF show 26-28 August). Ruth offered to go to represent the Opal Association for their work on the new classification.

The Opal association is doing a certificate the template has changed here's a sample that was printed just last night. There are some changes from the existing certificate form the first is probable origin the second is no more N-numbers. It will have only LIGHT, DARK or BLACK for the bodytone. The new form also has a disclaimer from the solicitor which states that the contents of the form are the opinion of the signatory and that the Opal Association accepts no liability for the accuracy of the information on the form or in relation to its use.

Members need to pass the written test and in the practical test and then sign a waiver agreeing to take full responsibility for any certificates of authenticity that they issue on the Opal association letterhead and that in order to issue such certificates they must be a financial member in good standing with the Association

Paul has also offered to check the certificates as they list on the Opal associations website to ensure that the description matches the photo and there's nothing obviously wrong with the certificates.

Paul said that we can update the tests every few years and he's prepared to put the work in and keep an eye on the website listed certificates.

Paul said that he is completed about five tests and he'll be conducting two more today. That's seven members who can issue certificates.

For the practical test Paul has a collection of stones which the member has to be able to establish what is light, what is dark, what is black, what is Welo, what is treated, to be able to separate Welo from Australian light ovals. Then there are a lot of stones which are not of such obvious origin. Some Welo, some Lightning Ridge but each doesn't look so obvious as to where they come from. The member has to try and establish where they are from. The test is not that easy. Then there are a couple of stones that are thrown in there that are

really misleading so even someone who's cut all their lives will have trouble identifying their origin.

Glowing red, immersion test, fluorescence test – the test wants you to think like a gemmologist and determine the origin using whatever test are required.

There has been a problem with people calling the dark Opal black Opal. That is where we're doing away with the body tone scale and making it more clear cut – BLACK – DARK – LIGHT. No body tone scale or numbers. The test kit contains several examples of each and the member must sort them into the correct body tone.

The member must also distinguish between translucent transparent and opaque Opals in the practical test.

There is also a set of examples which are artificial - some are imitation and some are synthetic, which the member has to identify in the test.

Paul passed around the Opal association's master grading and identifying kit for Opal which was produced by Cody opals which has examples of all the bodytones, all the brightness scores, all of the diaphaneity (transparent translucent opaque) and several synthetic and imitation Opals.

In relation to the certificates it was discussed that they could be printed in A5 or A4 size just from the printer settings (they are pdf format) also there would be an option for the member's name or alternatively the member number to go on a certificate as in some cases they who are requiring a certificate are resellers and not wanting the originator's name on the certificate

In relation to the written test which was written by Natassa Patel, the study guide that accompanies the test has several links to different web addresses and all the materials needed to be studied for that test and with all the answers can be found in those links. It's a matter of clicking through all the links and studying the materials and then doing the test.

There was a discussion as to how members in faraway places can undertake the test. Paul offered to do the testing at various Opal shows and exhibitions. Damien Cody suggested that maybe we need to have people in each capital city capable of carrying out the testing of members.

There are three membership levels and each level has a different membership fee and is entitled to write a different number of certificates (according to the membership level) once the member is qualified to do so. So the basic membership can write up to 10 certificates in a year, the medium level membership can write 50 certificates in a year, and the export member level can write an unlimited number of certificates in a year.

There was a discussion as to invoicing and Ruth suggested that the invoicing should be done automatically via email from the accounting package

There was discussion as to whether jewellery should be able to be certified that is to say opals which are already set into jewellery and also fossils. A retail shop member said that they need to certify jewellery and there was discussion as to whether jewellery set opals should be certified only if the sides of the stone are viewable ie claw set as opposed to bezel set where it's impossible to determine for sure whether they're doublet or solid.

Conclusion is no jewellery is to be certified.

Certification of fossilised Opals: The policy is that fossils shouldn't be certificated under our scheme.

Conclusion: Fossils are not to be certified but can be listed as opal-e.g. belemnites

Paul: Every twelve months we will likely update the test and improve the service. This is likely the first time when an association is allowing members to issue a certificate.

Ruth: CIBJO wants to create an Opal guide just like the Pearl Guide and Coral Guide. They have asked Terry Coldham from the GAA to put together a classification. Damien and Terry are both going to be at the CIBJO conference in India. They are putting together what we consider should be the Opal Guide. The approach is to use headings but not getting into the detail at this stage. At some stage that will be circulated for comment before October 2023 so this is your opportunity to comment and contribute.

Paul: We now have around \$40,000 in the Bank account. We should look at sponsoring some shows in Lightning Ridge, Winton, Coober Pedy perhaps. Call for ideas what we can do with this money to enhance our industry.

Ruth: I would like to see some money spent on design to update certificates and also perhaps look into updating the logo, making a membership pack.

Paul: We used to do all of that at the start, earlier on. We are revamping the website to take the new certificates, also noting the new waivers. I will chase up disclaimer forms from the test applicants who have passed.

I move that after they have passed the certification tests, new members write 10 certificates, intermediate members can write 50 certificates and export members can write unlimited. Any seconders [Seconded by George]. You can also update in the year pro-rata.

Ruth: Perhaps we should approach JAA and sponsor an Opal section award.

Damien: There already exists an Opal award

Ruth: Also the Lightning Ridge IOJDA awards – perhaps we should sponsor

Paul: We did sponsor the IOJDA Ridge show this year to the tune of \$2000.

Ruth: Maybe we should occupy a booth in an industry show and pay someone to man the booth [which show]

Paul: This year was concentrated on getting the test up and running, refining a bit. It will be refined more as we go, we will make it a bit harder and I think certification will give a bit of momentum to the membership drive – the demand for membership because members can issue certificates. It has been so quiet since COVID – so many of the shops who were members just don't exist any more.

Edmond: There should be a way to rectify an error in a certificate. Issuing many certificates there may be occasions where there is an honest error. This should be able to be corrected.

Paul: There are around eight members who can now issue certificates. This is out of roughly total of twenty members. We used to have around 65 members prior to COVID. A lot of those have actually quit the business. We will need to do a membership drive. It was suggested that members get 5 other people to join the association.

There was some discussion about an advertising budget. Sally suggested production of promotional items which we sell to raise some revenue. Ruth suggested we need a strategy to better spend the money. Damien suggested use of the two jewellery magazine in Australia and frequent press releases.

Ruth: We need to resurrect the Instagram page and keep it up to date. The ICA is growing as it is constantly promoting its members etc

Ross: The Opal Association instagram page has 863 followers

#### CLOSE OF MEETING

With no further business the meeting was declared closed by Paul at 825 am

Final note:

#### Opal certificates

At the meeting it was agreed to have A4 and A5 sizes but when printed there is a gap on the bottom. So for the moment we will print just A4 size.