



Young Scientists of Australia
Melbourne Inc.

Annual Report

2020

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1 Overview of the Year

The last year for YSA has been a slow one, with a new committee finding its feet after the aging out of key previous members.

While fewer social ran throughout the year, a new focus on homemade socials, particularly focused on at Natcon, lead to cheaper events and more unique YSA experiences.

However there was a major spike in new volunteers this year, particularly for Monash MySci, where for the first time in three years volunteers had to be turned down due to surplus. As well at least half of the volunteers were new to the organisation. While reasons for the change are currently unknown, it may be due to an earlier campaign for volunteers or through further word of mouth. As well a choice was made to reduce the cost of volunteering the program as well as giving volunteers a free shirt, which may of also contributed to the increased applications.

Swinburne also had an increased amount of volunteers at the program, which allowed for a more relaxed volunteering experience, alongside the removal of the larger 20 student groups from the previous year which impacted the connection between volunteer and participant.

YSA camp also continued to run this year, and while there was a smaller turn out than last year the event overall felt more personal and less formal. This allowed new and old people to mix and enjoy a relaxing weekend.

While this year was smaller than the last, I have enjoyed my time being a part of the committee, despite having to leave presidency after one term due to exchange. This position has thought me so much and allowed me to create friends for a lifetime.

I would like to give a special thanks to Michael and for supporting me in my inexperience and Catriona for helping with changes which impacted the ability to hold meetings, giving us a location while we found our feet.

Jessica Woolley – President

2 2019-2020 Committee

President	Jessica Woolley
Vice-President Science	Michael Beards
Vice-President Events	Faith Thornton
Secretary	Catriona Nguyen-Robertson
Treasurer	Faith Thornton
Communications	Aemilia Sherwell
Immediate Past President	James Salamy
General Member	Jamieson Doyle
General Member	Josh Suhaven
General Member	Najla Ratu Ragaya
General Member	Nicky Martin
General Member	Pravind Easwaran
General Member	Rebecca Neville
General Member	Rebecca Smith
General Member	Shon Kolomoisky

3 Secretary's Report

Through these challenging times with the growth of the COVID-19 pandemic, YSA Melbourne has had to devise methods of transferring its membership and meetups to online platforms.

The use of the "Tidy HQ" platform has enabled easy management of members from an admin perspective and also makes it easy for members to renew their membership prior to expiry. The organisation is also shifting to using the video and web conferencing service, "Zoom", to host its first virtual AGM. Following the ban on non-essential large gatherings, to keep the safety of our members as a priority, we may have to look to holding more meetings online in the future. The executive committee has previously used "Slack" for its administration and for online meetings. This may continue in the proceeding months, while Zoom is used to host larger, virtual gatherings that include all members.

The number of new members dropped by approximately a third from last year. Sign-ups tended to coincide with applications for outreach programs such as National Science Week and MySci. The Victorian government has also advised that schools are to close and it is unclear as to when they may resume, which may affect our capacity to be involved in outreach programs such as TSCE programs and MySci, thus potentially reducing membership (i.e. the involvement of current members and recruitment of members through these programs). Indeed, while the 2018-2019 year saw a membership growth, the 2019-2020 year has seen a decline. This may be, in part, due to a decreased number of socials. With a reduced number of school programs and social events in the year ahead, it may be difficult to grow the association.

The average age has skewed to being predominantly members over 18, indicative of increased retention of those who first became members at a younger age. The increased average age is something to consider for the sustainability of the organisation, especially as several members age out in 2020.

The outlook for many organisations, not only YSA Melbourne, appears uncertain. It is difficult to anticipate the future of YSA membership, however, as with previous years, outreach activities in particular will be a great way to reach potential new members.

Membership Statistics

Year	2018- 2019	2019- 2020
Current financial members	91	50
Honorary life members	8	8
New members	61 (67%)	22 (44%)
Renewals	30 (33%)	28 (56%)
Under 18 members	42 (46%)	11 (22%)
Over 18 members	49 (54%)	39 (88%)
Female members	53 (58%)	23 (46%)
Male members	38 (42%)	23 (46%)
Undisclosed		4 (8%)

4 Financial Report

This term saw major change to our accounting systems with the SGM late in 2019 approving a change to our financial year end date to February 15. This was done to simplify reporting and group expenditures due to our major camps and events into continuous financial years. Therefore, from this year onwards, the figures presented at each AGM will be for the preceding financial year that runs 16th Feb from the year before to end on that year's 15th of Feb.

Overview:

The Young Scientists of Australia, Melbourne Chapter, Inc. started this financial year with \$10,541.56 in cash and \$3,782.94 in assets, subdivided as per the table below. At the conclusion of this financial year, YSA held a total of \$8323.14 of cash with \$3,610.17 in assets.

Assets	30 th June 2019	15 th Feb 2020
Bank Account (Cash)	\$10,214.76	\$7,755.42
Paypal (Cash)	\$166.80	\$307.72
Float (Cash)	\$160.00	\$260.00
Physical Assets	\$3,782.94	\$3,610.17
Total Assets	\$14,324.50	\$11,933.31

The overall cash position of YSA Melbourne has significantly decreased by over 20% year to year, demonstrating the effects of a quiet year despite fixed costs required to run the organisation. The other reason our account is in the red so significantly this year is a large honorarium payment due from Monash University has not yet been made. This highlights the importance of our relationship with Monash and the necessity of careful financial planning if this funding were for whatever reason no longer available. Assets across the year were flat, as few sales or purchases were made, in line with a quiet year.

YSA posted a **large cash account loss of \$2,218.56** this financial year, with our overall capital decreasing by \$2,391.19. This is our largest lost for at least 10 years, and does threat to the existence of YSA if continued for 4 additional years. However, if the currently unknown subsidy may significantly reduce this loss and hence the threat it poses to within the normally seen variations. At the end of the financial year, YSA Melbourne did not have any liabilities. With this in mind, YSA is in an unclear financial position, but will be able to fund its events and operation into at least the short term.

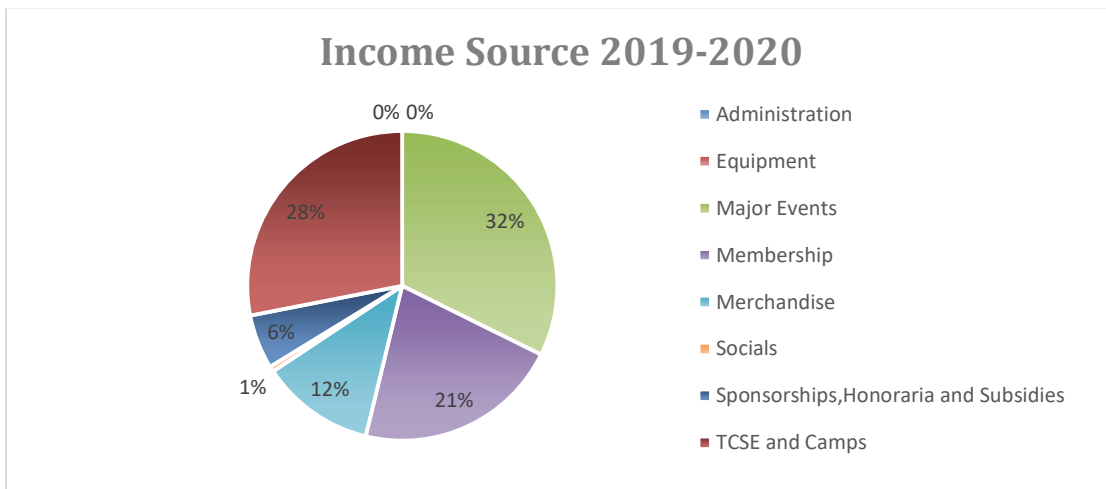
Income:

In contrast to the previous year, sponsorships, honorariums and subsidies, comprising only 6% of the total income, down from 35%. The far dominant income category was TSCE and camps (including winter camp) at 60%. The remainder of the income split was shared pretty equally between

membership, merchandise and socials, all of which were significantly down compared to last year.

Overall, our income has fallen by approximately a factor of 5, especially sharp declines were seen in memberships, decreasing by a factor of 4x, which is very much a risk going forward. The decline in socials was also very pronounced (129x less), and perhaps points to a different or changing culture with YSA.

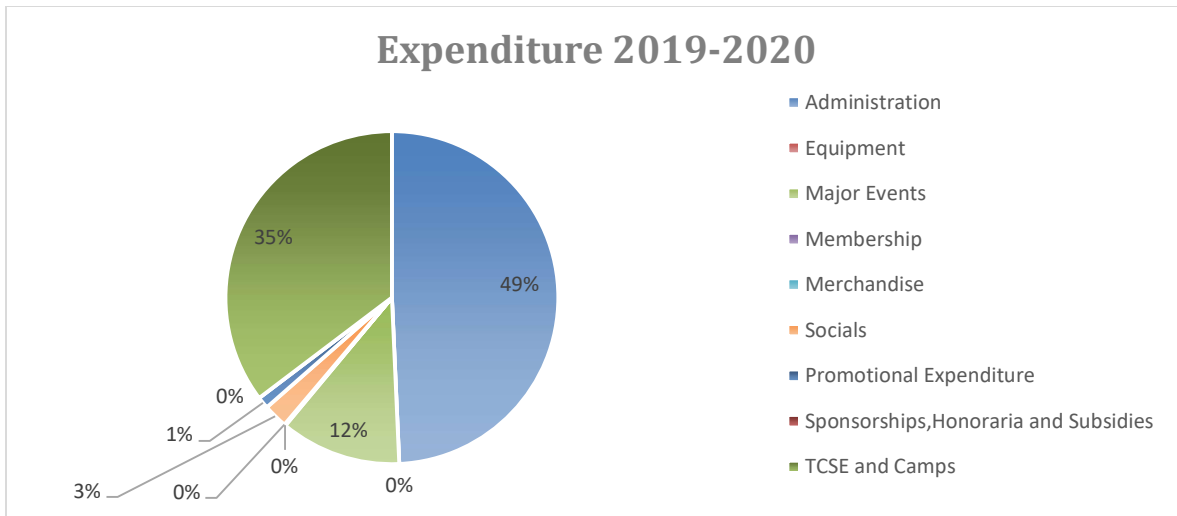
Income Summary	2019-2020	2018-2019
<i>Administration</i>	\$0.00	\$37.00
<i>Equipment</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<i>Major Events</i>	\$598.80	\$66.00
<i>Membership</i>	\$397.96	\$1,605.97
<i>Merchandise</i>	\$220.15	\$1,398.02
<i>Socials</i>	\$10.52	\$1,293.06
<i>Sponsorships, Honoraria and Subsidies</i>	\$105.00	\$3,365.00
<i>TCSE and Camps</i>	\$520.00	\$1,980.76
Totals	\$1,852.43	\$9,745.81



Expenditure:

Expenditure for this financial year fell by a factor of approximately 2 from the previous year, for the most part due to a reduction in activities. It is worth noting that administration costs increased by 6% year on year. We did not spend on merchandise or equipment this year which reduced these categories, and camp sizing was down on the previous year (as was major events, with only one rather than two occurring in the financial year bounds, leading to us showing a profit in this category). Administration is our largest cost, followed by TCSEs and camps, and then major events.

Expenditure Summary	2019-2020	2018-2019
Administration	\$2,006.33	\$1,892.67
Equipment	\$0.00	\$7.95
Major Events	\$478.68	\$969.31
Membership	\$4.00	\$38.40
Merchandise	\$1.88	\$1,559.94
Socials	\$95.76	\$1,888.08
Promotional Expenditure	\$46.20	\$302.85
Sponsorships, Honoraria and Subsidies	\$0.00	\$300.00
TCSE and Camps	\$1,438.00	\$2,334.16
Totals	\$4070.85	\$9,293.36



The 2019-2020 financial year expenses breakdown is quite different to the 2018-2019 financial year breakdown, suggesting the organisation is entering a period of financial uncertainty. Future committees should closely monitor the spread of both the income and expenditure they are able to source to ensure that fixed costs, shown here to be a significant portion of operating expenses especially in a quiet year are either reduced or income can be raised to the point that they can be covered.

5 Marketing and Communications

The communication activities at YSA has been quiet in the 2019-2020 committee year with decreased engagement throughout all platforms, especially Facebook. As a result, there were a few socials that were cancelled due to a lack of interest, poor advertising and planning. However, the posts recruiting volunteers for programs had a higher engagement than the events organised by YSA itself.

We used our platform and reach to advertise for a few organisations and programs, such as the National Youth Science Forum, Extrasensory, Spot the Bull Science and others.

As part of the nature of YSA's demographic there is a constant cycle of members aging out and younger people joining. With this change of membership there needs to be a change in the committee's way of engaging with the public. Facebook is no longer an appropriate platform to advertise all our events, however I do recommend keeping it but also expanding our uses to other social medias. Instagram is the platform I believe would be the most useful and gather the most amount of engagement from our targeted demographic. This would require more research into the business services of Instagram.

This year the communications has struggled with lower engagement resulting in events being cancelled. Facebook is no longer relevant to the younger part of our demographic and hence future members. Instagram is probably the best option of social media platform due to its business capabilities and the younger generations engage more with it. It has been a team effort, so thank you to everyone who contributed to the communications this year.

6 Activities

6.1 Monthly Socials

March 2019

- AGM & Bowling

19 people came to the AGM, with a split of 13 of them going to the post-AGM social, all of which were members. This type of social would only work if there was a big turn out like there was as it makes it less expensive. This is a good social to run on less busy periods of the year where more people can attend.

April 2019

- Science works social

There was only 6 people who attended this social which was not a very good turn-out. One thing to note is this social didn't happen on the school holidays, but rather the weekend after. This could have been one reason for the low attendance rate. For future similar events it would be more appropriate to run them on school holidays so all members can attend.

June 2019

- Circus

9 people attended this social with 4 non-members. The circus social was well-received by all participants. The high number of non-members allowed for the chance to meet some new faces. The activities at the Little Devils Circus were relaxed but well organised, and everybody had a great time trying new things and getting outside their comfort zone. Activities involved group work, which worked really well to bring members together.

July 2019

- Mexican Dinner

6 of our members came to this social but it was a bigger turnout due to the other chapter members coming for Natcon. This was a good social to give the other chapters a chance to meet the members of Melbourne and have a well-deserved rest after the 2 days of Natcon meetings. Also, by having each attendee paying for their own meal the night was easy and free for YSA to run.

September 2019

- SGM and Games in the park

13 people attended this social with only 1 non-member. It was initially to be held in the Flagstaff Gardens but due to rainy weather, the social part was held at the Games Laboratory. This was a good save for the social and worked out well as it gave a chance for people to play whatever they wanted and not whatever we brought. Also, a very cheap social which is always beneficial.

February 2020

- New Year BBQ

13 people attended this social with only 1 non-member. This was a good way for Wiffens and Staffies who were part of MYSci a chance to catch up and make friends with the other YSA members. Keeping up this tradition, having a similar social after every program we run is an effective way of keeping the Wiffens engaged and part of the YSA membership.

6.2 Monash MYSci

For the third year in a row, MYSci ran without any serious hitches and enjoyment by all. It was much more "intimate" this year, with only about 30 students joining us. Last year, for comparison, we had over 120 students. We are at a complete loss as to how the numbers decreased this much, as Monash did more advertising than is usual for the program, however the smaller numbers came as a hidden blessing.

Monash noted that running a smaller program is easier in terms of getting tours and lab visits - for example, tours to the wind tunnel and aqua core this year could not go ahead if we had more students. For this reason, after discussing with Jim, we came to the conclusion that somewhere between 50-60 students is likely the sweet spot for us to be running this program at.

Everything else went off without a hitch, and it leaves this kahuna sad that he won't be around to see the next MYSci and what it becomes.

6.3 Winter Camp

We continued running a training and science camp in the winter season, with a small group of us once again heading to Rowella Scout Hall for the weekend. While the numbers were smaller than the last year we had both older members and new faces attend the experience, with the smaller numbers building everyone as a group. We used everyday objects to perform some basic science experiments, such as extracting DNA from strawberries and spent hours playing with handmade and dyed Oobleck. With a few walks also throughout the weekend the fire made a lovely comfort on the last day, which bucketed down with rain. Overall the experience was once again fun for all who attended. Next year we need to focus on advertisement to try and boost numbers to keep the program afloat.

6.4 Natcon

At the end of July, the Melbourne branch of the Young Scientists of Australia proudly hosted the 2019 National Conference (NatCon) with the Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide branches of YSA in attendance.

NatCon began on the 27th of July with all the branches meeting at Swinburne in Hawthorn. Discussions for the day centred around the internal administration of the various branches of YSA and sharing advice on how to overcome common issues and challenges that arise. In the afternoon, the discussion moved towards our various outreach operations, including our large school programs/camps. Ideas about logistics, suggestions for staffie training and new game/activities for students were all brought forward and shared amongst the group. That evening, we hosted a small social dinner for all the other branches at a local restaurant.

Day two of NatCon was significantly shorter than the first and was generously hosted at the Royal Society of Victoria. Discussion points for the day mostly centred around the administration of school outreach programs and continued to how each branch runs socials. I would like to thank you all the other YSA branches for travelling to Melbourne for NatCon 2019, and we look forward to what 2020 holds for the National Conference.

7 The ConocoPhillips Science Experience

7.1 Swinburne University of Technology

Swinburne TCSE 2019 was held during the 10-12th of July. This year the program was quite small, due to a large number of dropouts last minute which could not be controlled. As such we were overstaffed for this program. This was not a major concern as it allowed people to take break when needed and made the program more relaxing for staff. The biggest change was the splitting of day 2, which had half the students attend the synchrotron at a time. While the synchrotron tour was exciting the activities left at Swinburne were less so. This did however allow our staff to chat with students and the students to mingle within their groups. Having taken heed of last year's request the group size was reduced to 3 smaller groups which made it a more personal experience and overall, better for both staff and student. The program was a great success and Jamey from Swinburne was impressed with how well our staffies did and kindly offered to pay for our last staffie dinner, of which we are very grateful.

7.2 University of Melbourne (Dookie)

This year YSA had two volunteers' staff Dookie TCSE. They worked alongside Melbourne university volunteers to lead a group of high school students with an interest in various agricultural pursuits on a whirlwind 3 day program. YSA also provided the always loved relay quiz, a fun break from all the serious and interesting learning topics such as dairy, wool production, soil science, and agricultural technology. It was an immensely rewarding experience for students and staff alike, and definitely one of the most unique TCSEs on the block.

8 Partnerships

8.1 ANZAAS

This year, YSA has continued its long and successful history of collaborations with the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS), despite our annual dinner with a scientist this year being postponed due to time and financial constraints. This event will hopefully run this year with a focus on renewable energy.

8.2 Science Schools Foundation

YSA Melbourne's partnership with the Science Schools Foundation continued strongly again this year. The SSF has continued their financial support of YSA's involvement with TCSE programs, the large selection this year being stated before. Catriona Nguyen-Robertson served as YSA's representative on their Federal Coordinating Committee for this term. However, at the end of 2019 a new representative Pravind Easwaren was elected to take over from Catriona who is sadly aging out

