

**ANARE CLUB INCORPORATED**  
**MEETING OF NATIONAL COUNCIL/ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**19 AUGUST 2023**

**REPORT OF CLUB FUTURES SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Club Futures sub-committee of the National Council has enjoyed a fitful existence over recent years, with periods of activity and longer periods of quiescence, influenced mostly by leadership. As a result there is not a substantial record of achievement to present, but rather some ideas which may bear fruit under different leadership. The matter has not lost of any of its urgency and relevance.

The paper below seeks to sketch out two possible paths to the future for the ANARE Club. There may be others. These ideas are intended as a starting point for the new National Council to develop a vision to take the Club forward. In that enterprise, the Council should take careful note of the findings of 2022 Membership Survey.

**David Ellyard.**

**DOES THE ANARE CLUB HAVE A FUTURE?**

The issue of the future of the ANARE Club has been a matter of concern and intermittent action by Club management for many years. The source of that concern is well known and acknowledged; the steady decline in Club membership, which is now less than five hundred, having been in four figures a decade or two ago. The decline has come from the inevitable loss of members through death or, less inevitably, through the failure to surviving members renew, the latter suggesting some dissatisfaction with the Club, or that some members have decided that the benefits of membership do not justify the modest outlay on membership dues.

In times past, the loss of members has been offset by recruitment from among the numerous ranks of more recent expeditioners. In general this is now not happening, as is well recognised., though some do join. Over the years , The Club has pursued a number of avenues to enhance recruitment, such as seeking to ensure that new expeditioners are aware of the existence and purpose of the Club or offering free or discounted membership. It is not apparent that any of the actions has had a significant impact of membership trends.

The reasons why expeditioners do not now join in the numbers seen to early decades are varied. The well-recognised change in the nature of the “Antarctic experience” seems to have reduced the desire or need for on-going contact among returning expeditioners, which in case can be meet through social media without the need for membership of the Club. More generally, the younger generations are not the “joiners” that earlier generations were. Many voluntary organisations are experiencing falling membership.

Should the current rate of decline continue for another decade, it is reasonable to expect the Club to cease to be viable. The Club’s current business model, designed predominantly to support current and former expeditioners, appears to be failing.

I suggest two alternative paths lie before us. One persists with the current model, while implementing actions to address some of its shortcomings. These actions, some of which have already been tried or begun, would include:

- A strong continuing relationship with the AAD, perhaps by some form of MOU. This could address the longstanding issue of access to the contact details of current expeditioners, maximum possible opportunity to brief expeditioners pre-departure, availability of the Club berth, support for the designation of a “agent” (perhaps the S/L) to promote the Club on base, provision of copies to Aurora to the bases and ships, provision by the AAD of videos to show at Midwinter, exploration of possible joint activities of mutual benefit such as with recruitment to AAD posts or concern with the preservation of heritage items
- Greater emphasis on supporting the Branches, which are the major point of contact between the Club and its members. This could include additional funding to allow for a range of activities (other than MW) to bring the members together, and perhaps to keep the costs of MW events down to encourage attendance. The Club has adequate financial resources to boost capitation to the Branches, and a motion to appropriately amend the Club Rules is to go before the AGM. the Branches will also need access to the most up-to-date membership lists and contact details, which could be provided quarterly.
- Greater emphasis on retention. Branches could be notified if any member fails to renew, so that contact can be made at the local level, and the reasons for non-renewal explored. If the reasons are financial, we could offer deferment or discount.
- Seeking interaction with other organisations likely to have ANAREs in their membership, such as those dealing with met, radio or construction.
- Exploration of what other benefits the Club might offer, so making membership more attractive.

It is not likely that such actions will prevent the ultimate closure of the Club through lack of numbers, but they could slow the rate of decline, buying us time.

The alternative path is more radical, as it would call for a change in the business model. Rather than a concentration on expeditioners, the Club would seek to build its membership from among the members of the wider general public with an interest or engagement with Antarctica. That such a potential membership exists is evident from the booming Antarctic tourist market, the “Attenborough effect” and the wide-spread concern with climate change. We have some “subscriber” (non-expeditioner) members now, but a concentrated effect should produce many more.

This course would have many potential implications, including, perhaps, the need to change the name of the Club, since ANARE would not have same impact among “non-expeditioner” members as it does among expeditioners. There would be equal access to voting rights, opportunities for leadership and other benefits for all members, though a membership category of “Expeditioner Member” could be created.

Such an expanded Club would still do what we do now; run midwinter events, publish Aurora, seek to preserve heritage items. promote oral history. And with a larger and broader membership we would have more clout in pushing for National Antarctic Museum. This proposed change is likely to meet opposition from members who are comfortable with what we have now, but perhaps to survive we have to adapt. Without adaptation, we may not have a Club at all.

