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Company	CSL Limited
Code	CSL
Meeting	AGM
Date	16 October, 2019
Venue	The Westin, Sydney
Monitor	Patricia Beal (attended AGM for the Melbourne Monitors)

Number attendees at meeting	179 shareholders, 7 proxyholders, 115 visitors & non-voting shareholders
Number of holdings represented by ASA	848
Value of proxies	$485m
Number of shares represented by ASA	1.916m (equivalent to 9th largest holder in Top20)
Market capitalisation	$115 billion
Were proxies voted?	Yes, on a poll
Pre AGM Meeting?	Yes, with director Megan Clark and company secretary Fiona Mead

Happy shareholder celebrate 25 years listed

There was a short celebratory video to open proceedings. When Chair Brian McNamee then rose to open proceedings, he was greeted with applause; not your usual AGM behaviour! The mood continued throughout the meeting, with further applause in response to both his and the CEO's addresses. It was very clear that attendees welcomed CSL's first AGM in Sydney, so hopefully it won't be as long before the next. The fact that around 30% of CSL's shareholders live in NSW should count for something.

The previously announced forecast profit growth of 7 - 10% (in constant currency terms) was reconfirmed. Very significant growth in staff numbers was accompanied by several awards for being a highly desirable employer. The company's primary commitment to patients and public health were emphasised, including establishment of a new quality release laboratory in Amsterdam, specifically to ensure no interruptions to vaccine supply across Europe, presuming Brexit happens.

When the meeting was opened to questions, ASA congratulated the Board and Executives for maintaining the growth trajectory of the company over the past year. We continued by questioning whether the supply of plasma was still the number one risk to the company, as had been stated at last year's AGM. The response enumerated considerable investments in additional plasma collection centres and processing laboratory capacity; indeed the whole supply chain for plasma, after a competitor had flagged problems with their own supplies. CSL's ability to compete and innovate were cited, not specifically as a concern, but as a necessary condition, for CSL to continue its distinguished record into the future.

The next questioner also complimented the company, but drew attention to a prominent American company, which had also seemed to be above reproach in the health sector, but had had a sudden withdrawal of a major product after problems with a contaminant. We were assured this company is not complacent, but certainly has very strong risk management, and is very mindful of the trust placed in it. Concerns with current world political concerns were mentioned by another speaker; the response was that CSL is positive that its products are lifesaving and valued worldwide, regardless of the political climate.

One query concerned possible share split. The response was that it would be expensive to the company without any change to the economic substance. The number of shareholders has increased anyway, and there is high liquidity.   Likewise a dividend reinvestment plan was unlikely. It is not efficient use of capital for the company, and anyone can choose to buy on market at any time. CSL's long-term debt is inexpensive to service, and the Board is very comfortable at its current level.

Of the other more than a dozen commenters / questioners, it was noteworthy that around half said they had bought shares in the initial public offer and still happily remained with the company. Most others were long-term holders. All complimented the Company.

When proceedings moved to the re-election of Directors, both ladies spoke convincingly about their commitment and suitability to contribute to CSL. Neither was questioned.

ASA was the only commenter / questioner regarding the remuneration report. After complimenting the Board about the long-term focus of the scheme introduced in 2017, and its alignment in most particulars with ASA policy, we asked if the Board had considered reducing the remuneration outcome, given its size this year. Not seriously, was the reply, as it was largely due to long-term incentive awards from the previous scheme being inflated by the large rise in the share price. And it was very much aligned with shareholders' increases in value of their holdings.

ASA also complimented the Board on the annual hurdle which must be achieved in each year before any awards vest.

There were no other questions about remuneration, but these resolutions did receive against votes of 6 to 8.5%, plus significant "abstain" votes of around 3.5% equivalent (not counted in results percentages).