

NSW Wildlife Council

Meeting Number 2

Thursday 2 February 2006 at 9am
Department of Environment & Conservation
Level 3, 43 Bridge Street Hurstville

Minutes

1.0 Attendance and Welcome

1.1 Present: Steve Amesbury (Webmaster); Kay Brady (NANA); Sonja Elwood (Sydney Wildlife) joined the meeting at 10.20am; Melinda Fallson (FAWNA) joined the meeting at 10.35am; Joan Hills (Wildlife Carers' Network); Audrey Koosmen (NATF) Chair; Coralie Letica (Wildcare); Chris Neville (Wildlife Aid); Ilona Roberts (TVWC); Alan Rose (Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers); Sandra Stewart (Individual Licence Holders); Lorraine Vass (FOK); Julie Webb (NRWC); Stan Wood (WIRES).

Phone link-up: Barbara Witham (Koalas in Care)

1.2 Apologies: Jan Brazel, Gwen Parry-Jones (Wildlife Arc); Cheyne Flanagan (Koala Preservation Society of NSW); Ian Johnson (Wildlife Aid) Mike Jupp (WIRES alt.); Christeen McLeod (Koalas in Care); Ronald Ling (ORRCA); Jill Taylor (Hunter Koala Preservation Society); Bill Waterhouse (Wildlife alt.); Helen Kennedy (Minute Secretary).

1.3 Meeting opened: Audrey welcomed members and outlined the general etiquette she wished to be followed during the Council's meetings (**Copy will be forwarded separately**)

2. Register of Proxies: Nil

3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held Saturday-Sunday 15-16 October 2005

(circulated by email)

Moved Alan Rose and **seconded** Stan Wood that the Minutes as circulated be confirmed.

Carried

3.1. Business Arising

3.1.1 Seven-days holding period

Lorraine reported that she had been advised by the Minister's office that the Minister is considering advice on the Council's letter of early November and that a response can be expected shortly.

3.1.2 Companion Animals Act Review

Audrey reported that the Review has been completed and implementation of the recommendations is underway at the local level. She advised groups to contact their local Councils to ensure input regarding wildlife.

Action: Groups to follow up implementation of the *Companion Animals Act* Review

3.1.3 State-wide insurance

Stan reported that on the basis of the preliminary enquiries he had made significant economies of scale could be achieved with some smaller groups saving up to \$30 per head on current costs. Nothing more can be done until the Council's incorporation, after which bids from the open marketplace will be sought.

3.1.4 Purchasing Sub-Committee Report (Agenda attachment 3.1.4)

Sandra spoke to her report which advocated a discount option to the bulk purchase notion with its inherent problems of storage and handling. She welcomes any feedback. Stan mentioned that WIRES has been investigating ways to maximize purchasing power but has been unable to identify significant efficiencies.

Moved Julie Webb, **seconded** Alan Rose that Sandra be thanked for her report and that the Council maintains an interest but does not put undue effort or resources into centralized purchasing at this stage. Carried

3.1.5 Government agencies' responsibilities

Tabling of the document was held over until Sonja's arrival. (Not received).

3.1.6 Council's progress

3.1.6.1 Reservation of Council's business name

Kay reported that reservation is secure until 12 April 2006, by which time an application for incorporation (together with the fee of \$98.00), a constitution and nomination of a Public Officer must be lodged.

Action: Kay Brady

3.1.6.2 Model Rules (Constitution)

Stan reported that, as the Department of Fair Trading does not check constitutions for compliance with the statutory model rules, the circulated draft is under legal review. When completed the reviewed draft will again be circulated for members' comments with a one-week deadline.

Action: Stan Wood

3.1.6.3 NWC Statement of Values (Agenda attachment 3.1.6.3)

Steve explained that his motivation for drafting a statement of values came from reading the draft constitution's disciplinary clauses which focus on individual behaviour. He suggested that the constitution also requires an objective basis for disciplinary processes directed at member groups.

Two amendments to the draft were agreed upon.

Under 2. **Sharing and cooperation** and groups' are to be inserted between the words *individuals* and *in*.

The addition of a fifth point: **5. Honest, lawful and ethical processes and behaviours** in all undertakings by individuals and groups in the wildlife rehabilitation community

Moved Stan Wood **seconded** Alan Rose that the Council adds as a preamble to the Constitution, a values statement which succinctly identifies the core values it

identifies as being crucial to achieving its objectives and that all member groups be first given the opportunity to comment on the statement. Carried

Note: The amended Values Statement for comment is **Attachment 1**.

Action: Members to circulate the statement and feed back comment to Stan Wood.

3.1.6.4 Promotion

3.1.6.4.1 Letters of introduction and National body

Lorraine referred to the summary of out-going correspondence. She will continue to send letters of introduction as opportunities present themselves and more routinely as time permits.

Action: Lorraine Vass

Lorraine also reported activity on the Wildlife Carers Discussion Group, which had been established by Adrian Caneris in early November to foster discussion on progressing the formation of a national body. The List currently has 28 members from across the country although there had been little activity since Christmas

3.1.6.4.2 Media, including resignation of Media Officer (Agenda attachment 3.1.6.4)

Sonja reported that compilation of extensive media lists was now completed and the media release about the Council's formation had been distributed. The Minister is unable to join the Council for any part of its meeting but he will be able to within the next 3 weeks at a time to be set by the Executive. His office will sponsor a 'meet and greet the press'.

Alan and Lorraine tabled items from the *Glen Innes Examiner* and *Northern Rivers Echo* respectively dealing with the Council and Grey Headed Flying Foxes.

Sonja withdrew her letter of resignation after Sandra Stewart agreed to buddy with her and share the workload.

Action: Sonja Elwood and Sandra Stewart

3.1.6.5 Finance

3.1.6.5.1 Draft budget and bank account (Agenda attachment 3.1.6.5)

The draft budget circulated by Kay was received.

Julie advised that she holds receipts and cash from the Steering Committee which she will forward to the Treasurer.

Action: Julie Webb

No funds have been received from either IFAW or DEC. Audrey will clarify whether their offers are still on the table and whether invoices are required. (Outside the meeting, Jeff Hardy advised the Council to write a submission for operational funding – see agenda item 8.5).

Action: Chair and Executive

Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses was discussed. Kay tabled a draft requisition form which she will refine and post to the List. It was agreed that reimbursement would be actioned by approval at a meeting or by two signatories to the proposed bank account and ratification at the following meeting.

Action: Treasurer

Moved Stan Wood and **seconded** Ilona Roberts that the Secretary be reimbursed in the amount of \$94.59 when funds are on hand. Carried (Agenda item 6 – Agenda attachment 6)

Action: Treasurer

Matter arising: it was agreed that costs associated with distributing media releases should be directed to the Council by the Sydney Wildlife office.

3.1.6.5.2 Level of financial assistance for meeting attendance (Agenda attachment 3.1.6.5)

The report circulated by Joan was received and noted. Julie requested that a 3 months advance fare of \$240 from Lismore return be included.

Moved Kay Brady and **seconded** Stan Wood that Joan be thanked for her report and the draft budget adjusted accordingly. Carried.

Action: Treasurer

3.1.6.5.3 Operational funding sources

Audrey had nothing further to report from item 3.1.6.5.1

3.1.6.5.4. Council insurance

Stan had nothing to report

3.1.6.6 Logo Competition

Coralie commented on the poor response to the competition and summarized the entries which had been received. Melinda said she had not entered because she operates a professional graphics/publishing company, *Praise Dog Publishing*. It was agreed that Melinda present up to four sketches to the List within a fortnight for consideration, after which the Council would make a decision.

Action: Melinda Fallson to check criteria and post schematics to the List.
Council members to provide feedback to Coralie/List

3.1.6.7 Education Program (Agenda attachment 3.1.6.7)

Sandra's report on TAFE's certificate courses *Animal Attending* (Certificate II) and *Veterinary Nursing* (Certificate IV) was received and various problems noted, in particular those associated with the introduction of the elective associated with the latter, *RUV 3401A: Rehabilitate and Release Native Wildlife* delivered by Tamworth ITAFE in 2005 and which is expected to be available state-wide later in 2006.

Moved Julie Webb and **seconded** by Alan Rose that the Council writes to TAFE and DEC pointing out that:
(a) by law, rehabilitation and release of wildlife can only be carried out by DEC licence in New South Wales,

- (b) the course's target group (veterinary nurses) are usually involved in initial care only (unless licensed by DEC), and
(c) Council is willing to assist in developing and writing the curriculum for RUV3401A.
Carried

Action: Secretary assisted by Sandra Stewart and Stan Wood to draft letters to TAFE and DEC.

Matters arising:

- (1) Sonja mentioned that Heather Parsons had been contacted by a TAFE officer requesting assistance with the content of a bush regenerator course.

Action: Audrey Koosmen to email Heather to identify the requesting officer and pass on to Sandra.

- (2) The need for Council members to be working towards benchmark training standards was discussed. Sydney Wildlife and WIRES are both presently reviewing and upgrading their training manuals.

3.1.6.8 Website development

Steve proposed that now the Council is up and running thought needs to be given by Council members to what they want the website to achieve. This will determine the overall design of the site and the way in which it will develop.

Actions: Council members to provide feedback on the website's purpose via the List Webmaster and Melinda Fallson to discuss design and development options.

4. Ratification of New Members

Moved Julie Webb and **seconded** by Sonja Elwood that nominations for membership by Rescue & Rehabilitation of Australian Native Animals (RRANA) and Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans (ORRCA) be accepted. Carried.

5. General Business

5.1 Code of Conduct

The desirability of developing a code of conduct for incorporation (together with a statement of values) into the Constitution's preamble was reiterated. Various member groups have developed Codes of Conduct which would assist in progressing the task.

Actions: Audrey Koosmen to post a copy of the NATF's Code of Conduct to the List.

Stan Wood to post a copy of WIRE's Code of Conduct to the List.

Steve Amesbury and Stan Wood to further develop a statement to serve as a preamble to the draft Constitution.

At this point, (approximately noon) the meeting broke for Lunch

5.2 NWC Patron/s

Steve reiterated some of the points that he had made his email of 15 January regarding the desirability for a high-profile patron: what would be expected of them; how would they be used; how accessible do they need to be, how long their term, etc.

Suggestions for patrons included Jennifer Saunders, editor of *Australia* magazine; Tim Flannery, Director of the South Australia Museum, and Tracey Grimshaw, TV journalist.

Action: All members to bring thoughts for developing a selection criteria and position description for consideration to the Council's next meeting.

5.3 Grey Headed Flying Fox – DEC's licences review and general strategy

It was agreed to form a working party comprising Stan Wood, Alan Rose, Melinda Fallson, Ilona Roberts and Sonja Elwood (as Media Officer) with power to co-opt field specialists as required to :

- (a) gather and analyse the published research;
- (b) identify relevant partners and stakeholders;
- (c) identify desired outcomes (e.g. increase awareness of heat stress; better responses; improved species image, etc.);
- (d) develop and draft the strategy;
- (e) implement and then review the strategy

Action: The Working Party to report progress to the next meeting.

5.4 NWC Research Partnerships (Agenda attachment 5.4)

Steve's discussion paper and its recommendations were noted and the following points made:

- Carers are often reluctant to collate basic statistical data
- WIRES is building an organisation-wide database which is attracting interest from the Federal Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries
- NATF's and FOK's records and statistics were used in the compilation of the Port Stephen's Koala Plan of Management and Lismore's Draft Koala Plan of Management respectively.

No decision was made on the recommendations.

At this point the Chair introduced Dr Paul Canfield, Professor of Veterinary Pathology and Clinical Pathology, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney who gave a short address covering his own work in wildlife and ways in which the Faculty might support the Council . A range of questions followed, generating the following Actions :

- (a) The Secretary will write to Dr Tony English, Chair, Australian Society of Conservation Biology (a special interest group of the Australian Veterinarian Association) formally introducing the Council.
- (b) Groups needing advice on pursuing research interests can contact Prof Canfield who will informally direct the request to an appropriate researcher (no centralized register of research interests exists).
- (c) The Council will lobby state and national governments on areas in which research on wildlife will assist their identified priorities, e.g. developing international and inbound tourism. (The Australian Research Council's focus is now directed at zoologists and biologists rather than veterinarian scientists, however understanding and managing disease is very significant in maintaining local populations.)
- (d) Melinda will obtain a professional accountancy/taxation opinion on the practice by some groups of issuing tax invoices and receipts for veterinary services which are immediately refunded to the group to obtain taxation benefits.

She will then circulate a pro forma invoice for use by groups.

Stan and Lorraine will develop an article on tax relief to veterinarians for their wildlife *pro bono* work for publication in the *Australian Veterinary Journal*.

Moved Julie Webb and **seconded** Lorraine Vass that the Council thanks Paul for his extraordinary effort in addressing the Council the day after his arrival back in Australia and for conveying the Faculty's support of the Council's formation. Carried.

5.5 Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (Agenda attachment 5.5)

Moved Stan Wood and **seconded** Joan Hill that the discussion paper and recommendations be noted and that in the first instance the Council writes to Dr John Drinan, Chair of the AAWS Advisory Committee to seek clarification of the implementation process and proposing the Council as a 'key stakeholder'. Carried

Action: Secretary

5.6 Veterinarian Database proposal

It was agreed that consideration of a database be deferred until actions regarding tax relief for veterinarians noted above are further advanced.

5.7 NSW Department of Environment and Conservation – recent environmental funding initiatives

The brochure *City and Country Environment Restoration Program* was tabled for distribution to members.

5.8 NWC Discussion List – protocols

It was agreed that matters that were the primary concern of individuals would be directed to them rather than the List and that participants would only maintain the thread when absolutely necessary.

Action: Steve to post an email instructing how to disengage previous postings in reply

5.9 RSPCA's Education Programme

Action: Secretary to write to Suzanne Thomas, RSPCA Education Officer, introducing the Council and offering to work together to introduce a wildlife component in the RSPCA's state-wide education programme

6. Presentation of Accounts

See item 3.1.6.5.1

7. Correspondence (Agenda attachment 7.1 and 7.2)

Moved Julie Webb and **Seconded** Joan Hills that the outgoing correspondence as listed in the agenda be endorsed and the Incoming correspondence listed be received. Carried

8. Other Business

8.1 Fundraising proposal

Alan Rose kindly donated a sapphire which would require setting in a ring to raise funds for the Council. The cost of setting is estimated at \$200.

Moved Julie Webb and **seconded** Joan Hills that Alan be thanked for his generous donation and that he proceeds with having the sapphire set into a ring, after which it is advertised on e-Bay with a reserve price of \$1,000. Carried

Action: Alan Rose

8.2. Letter from Ms Linda Dennis

The Secretary read the letter which expressed Ms Dennis' opposition to the NWC's recommendation that the 7 day rule for holding a native animal be amended to 48 hours and advised that she had written to the Minister for the Environment accordingly.

Moved Stan Wood and **seconded** Sonja Elwood that Ms Dennis be informed that her letter had been received and presented to the meeting and that she be thanked for her interest in the matter. Carried

Action: Secretary

8.3 Anvil Hill Coalition Statement

Sandra's email of 25 January in which she questions the appropriateness of the Council sending a letter of support to the Coalition regarding its opposition to the proposed open cut coal mine at Anvil Hill near Muswellbrook was discussed.

Whilst acknowledging that it is entirely within the Council's functions to be active in matters of environmental protection the practicalities of resources to match the sheer number of environmentally damaging planning proposals across the state is at issue.

It was agreed that the Council could only respond to those proposals which were brought to its attention with time enough to prepare an informed response. The Anvil Hill proposal appears to fit this requirement. A sub-committee comprising Sandra Stewart, Audrey Koosmen and Lorraine Vass will seek more information as soon as practicable and report back to the Council with a recommendation.

Action: Sandra to contact the Coalition for more information in the first instance and the sub-committee to advise the Council via the NWC discussion list of its recommendation.

8.4 Monofilament Netting

Alan's email passing on the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society's request for support for placing a national ban on the importation and sale of monofilament netting was tabled.

Lorraine read out a letter which she had drafted to the Minister for Environment and Heritage.

Moved Melinda Fallson and **seconded** Julie Webb that the draft letter, amended to include the sentences "The Council wishes to clearly distinguish between backyard monofilament netting and appropriately erected orchard netting. The Council strongly supports the latter" be endorsed and emailed to the Minister and copied to Matt McEachan, Secretary to Andrew Laming Member for Bowman, by Monday 6 February 2006. Carried

Action: Secretary

8.5 Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Funding Submission

Moved Julie Webb and **seconded** Coralie Letica that the Executive draft a project-based submission, including the budget as amended through the morning, to DEC for funding to operate the Council and its undertakings. Carried

Action: Executive

8.6 Mudgee Guardian

Joan tabled an article on birds and heat stress reported in the *Mudgee Guardian*, 20 January 2006, p.4 which attributed various statements that are not WIRES policy to a spokesperson of the local branch.

Action: Stan Wood to take the matter to the WIRES State Management Committee.

9. Future Meetings

Lorraine raised the feasibility of conducting Council business on three rather than four meetings a year. It was agreed to meet again in 3 months and then review the proposal.

The third meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 23 May 2006 commencing at 9.30am and ending 3.30pm in the 2nd floor conference room, DEC, Bridge Street, Hurstville

Action: Chair to book the large 2nd floor conference room.

10. Votes of thanks

Moved Julie Webb and **seconded** Sandra Stewart that Audrey be thanked for her contribution in getting the Council up and running. Carried

Moved Stan Wood and **seconded** Audrey Koosmen that Lorraine be thanked for the amount of time and expertise she has applied to the role of Secretary. Carried

11. Close of Meeting: 3.25pm

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Chair

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Date