

# New South Wales Wildlife Council, Inc.

## Meeting Number 4

Held 8 August 2006 at Department of Environment and Conservation  
Level 2, 43 Bridge Street Hurstville, 9:35am

## Minutes

### 1. Attendance

#### 1.1 Present

**Attendees:** Joan Hills (Wildlife Carers' Network), Ilona Roberts (Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers), Alan Rose (Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers), Audrey Koosman (NATF) (**Chair**), Lorraine Vass (FOK –arrived 10am) (**Secretary**), Helen Kennedy (Sydney Wildlife) (**Minute Secretary**), Steve Amesbury (NANA), Chris Neville (Wildlife Aid), Stan Wood (WIRES), Sonja Elwood (Sydney Wildlife) Gwen Parry-Jones (Wildlife ARC).

**via Phone Hook Up:** Sandra Stewart (Individual Licence Holders), Amanda Twomey, (RRANA) Barbara Witham (Koalas in Care).

**Guests:** Brendon Neilly, Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Dan Lunney, Principal Research Scientist DEC, Jessica Bryant DEC, Ian Shannon DEC, Patrick Connors (WIRES Fauna Database Officer).

#### 1.2 Apologies

Coralie Tarlinton (Wildcare)

### 2. Register of Proxies: Nil

### 3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 23 May 2006

Stan Wood **moved** and Alan Rose **seconded** that the Minutes as circulated be accepted as read and confirmed.

**Motion carried.**

#### 3.1 Business Arising

##### 3.1.1 Statewide Insurance

Stan reported the following quotation from AON Risk Services:

Public Liability for \$20,000,000,

Death & Permanent Injury for \$50,000.

Group Coverage for all groups affiliated with the Council, \$16,350.

Pro rata for each group.\$3.77 + GST per person insured: approx \$4.00.

The quote is based on 4000 volunteers. Groups will need to provide accurate figures. Coverage is limited to affiliated members of the NWC.

Implementation options

1. Groups pay pro rata on a per person basis. This would result in significant savings for all groups with smaller groups reaping the greatest benefit. Would also involve considerable administrative work for the Council, invoicing and receipting member groups and tracking payments, etc.

2. NWC to pay. The Council currently has no funds for this purpose although an amount for insurance has been included in the 2006-7 budget requirements forwarded to DEC earlier in the year.
3. NWC to pay half and Affiliated Wildlife Groups to pay other half
4. Approach DEC to fund.

The Chair thanked Stan for his work in investigating and negotiating the insurances.

Stan Wood **moved** and Chris Neville **seconded** that in principle agreement be given to the arrangements outlined and to proceed with determining the best application of collective insurance coverage to NWC member groups

**Motion carried.**

Brendon Neilly indicated that DEC may be interested in meeting the costs of insurance coverage.

**Action:** Stan Wood will obtain alternate quotes within the next few weeks and forward to Brendon who will follow through with the Department. Brendon reiterated the view that if DEC is to cover the cost of insurance for wildlife rehabilitation groups/Individuals, it would be limited to NWC affiliates.

### **3.1.2 Authority to Fundraise**

Lorraine has completed and forwarded the application for charitable fundraising status to the Office of Charities.

Joan Hills **moved** and Lorraine Vass **seconded** that the appointment of Ron Witham as NWC's Honorary Auditor be ratified.

**Motion carried.**

### **3.1.3 Logo – Held over until November.**

### **3.1.4 Website Development**

Webmaster Steve Amesbury reported that the only amendments have been to reflect the change in the Executive.

Discussion about developing criteria for promoting events such as David Suzuki's tour and his association with the Anvil Hill campaign on the website was inconclusive.

It was reiterated that Jeremy Nunn would provide assistance and technical support in maintaining the Website when and if required.

### **3.1.5 NWC Patron**

A number of the points raised in the paper put together by Alan to assist in discussion were revisited without reaching conclusion.

What the Council wants from a Patron and who we want are still not clear although a couple of suggestions, including Paul Canfield, were put forward.

It was agreed that the matter requires further consideration and no action be taken at this point.

### **3.1.6 Animal Care and Management Training Package Review**

Brendon Neilly reported on progress of the national review now underway. Wildlife rehabilitation has not been very well covered to date and input from the sector is being sought. Current course content can be accessed on-line.

A working party comprising Sandra Stewart, Helen Kennedy, and possibly Coralie Tarlinton was formed.

**Action: Brendon** to forward documentation from the reviewing committee for circulation to Council members and action by the working party, including the draft scoping report, feedback form and the tool for mapping jobs for qualifications.

Sandra suggested that some of the members of the Council complete Certificate 1V Training and Assessment.

### **3.1.7 Road Kill Campaign (Injured Wildlife)**

Alan Rose **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that no further action is required on the Road Kill Campaign proposal at this time.

**Motion carried.**

### **3.1.8 Newsletter**

Agreement was reached on the following points:

(1) Ozark (on line discussion group) will not be approached regarding the Council putting a link to the Newsletter.

(2) The Newsletter will be proof-read by the Executive before distribution. Executive members were to return comments/suggested changes as soon as possible.

(3) Primary distribution will be electronic. Council reps should download the Newsletter and distribute within their own organizations and networks.

(4) Information/articles for the Newsletter should be sent to [editor@nwc.org.au](mailto:editor@nwc.org.au)

(5) Hard, colour copies will be distributed to the *Newsletter Stakeholders' List*. Additions to the *List* to be sent to Steve Amesbury

(6) Sonja Elwood will approach the printer used by Sydney Wildlife to quote on printing the first and future issues of the Newsletter.

(7) Joan Hills and Gwen Parry-Jones will assist with compiling and producing the Newsletter (Gwen does not want to take a major role).

**Stan Wood** moved and **Alan Rose** seconded that a budget of up to \$500 be set for the colour printing and distribution of the first issue.

**Motion carried**

A vote of thanks was extended to Sandra Stewart for compiling and producing the first issue of the Council's Newsletter.

### **3.1.9 4<sup>th</sup> National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference**

**Stan Wood** moved and **Alan Rose** seconded that the Council pay registration and associated travel and accommodation expenses for NWC Chair, Audrey Koosmen to represent the Council at the National Conference in Darwin.

**Motion carried.**

## **4. Reports**

### **4.1 Treasurer's Report**

A balance of \$19,431.29 was noted, \$5000 of which is payment for the Koala records provided to the NSW Wildlife Survey by member groups.

**Lorraine Vass** moved and **Steve Amesbury** seconded that the Treasurer's Report as tabled be received.

**Motion carried**

**Stan Wood** moved and **Chris Neville** seconded that all payments noted in the Treasurer's Report be ratified

**Motion carried.**

**Stan Wood** moved and **Alan Rose** seconded that the following payments be made to

**Joan Hills**

\$153.75 – Travel

**Sandra Stewart**

\$29.10 – Postage

\$45.40 – Stationery

**Lorraine Vass**

\$241.13 – Travel, Common Seal Stamp, Postage

The Council will accept travel claims going back to 2 February 2006.

Reference to Minutes on the Funds Requisition Form should be deleted and "i" needs to be inserted into the word Wildlife.

**Action: Audrey Koosmen** to ask Sandra to update the form.

#### **4.2 Grey Headed Flying Fox Working Party**

The report was received. In regard to the letters to be written by Alan Rose to the Federal and Queensland National Party and Victorian government, it was agreed that the Council has a role in supporting the conservation of Flying Fox habitat in other states.

Ilona Roberts will write a letter to the Federal Minister regarding the cessation of that national Flying Fox count and pointing out that the loss of 2.5 % in the recent heat loss exceeded the 1.5% culling entitlement.

It was also noted that the Working Party would like to tap into the \$350,000 National Heritage Trust funding for Flying Fox preservation received by the EPA to cover carer vaccination (which is paid for by Government in Victoria) and other projects.

**Stan Wood** moved and **Gwen Parry-Jones** seconded that the Council incorporate into its annual funding submission to DEC the cost of vaccination against Australian Bat Lyssavirus for Flying Fox carers of member groups and individual licence holders.

**Motion carried.**

**Action: Stan Wood** will calculate costs for the submission

It was agreed that the Working Party will formulate a publicity campaign to promote Flying Foxes in the mainstream media:

Suggestions included:

- (1) Approaching James Woodford, a Sydney Morning Herald journalist who like bats
- (2) Forming alliances with organizations like the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for cooperation/support.
- (3) Aiming to publish a supportive piece monthly.

**Action: Audrey Koosmen** to provide Alan with the contact details of Judy May of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for support/articles.

The Chair thanked Alan and Working Party members for their continuing work.

#### **4.3 Research and Statistics Working Party**

The report was received and its proposed actions, the formulation of a plan to create a minimum data set for wildlife rehabilitation records and a 'research' activities form to create a small database, discussed.

**Alan Rose** moved and **Stan Wood** seconded that the Working Party proceed with the two proposed actions.

**Motion carried.**

#### **4.4 Fund Raising**

Brochures have been created and distributed for publicizing the raffle of the sapphire ring.

Raffle Ticket books of 20 tickets have been prepared for distribution. For additional books, send an email to Alan Rose.

The raffle will be drawn on St Valentine's Day 2007 (14 February).

Return Payments for sold tickets can be made by cheque, sent to the Treasurer and notification of payment to be given to Alan Rose

The Chair thanked Alan for the donation of the ring and Sandra Stewart for creating the brochures.

### **5. General Business**

#### **5.1 DEC (Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW)**

##### **5.1.1 Review of DEC's Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy**

Brendon Neilly reported a few emerging issues, some of which link across agencies, e.g. the Dept of Primary Industries *viz a viz* zoos and fauna parks - "ownership" of handraised animals, clarification of who is responsible for the animals, animals being passed around, animals being kept in care/captivity and not released etc.

There was agreement that input from wildlife rehabilitators into the Review process is crucial.

**Action:** **Brendon Neilly** will email an electronic copy of the Policy to the Secretary for circulation to Council members, nominating the deadline for responses.

##### **5.1.2 Annual Reporting**

Sonja Elwood (on behalf of Sydney Wildlife) pointed out that Wildlife Licence renewal is 30 June. The deadline for reporting records and other required information is 30 September. She suggested that 3 months is not enough time to get the information in and processed and proposed the Calendar Year (January to December) as a better reporting period.

**Action:** **Brendon Neilly** will email the timeline of what is due when and what is actually needed.

In regard to a related discussion on the need for better data sets being kept by the Department, **Stan Wood** suggested inviting Patrick Connor, WIRES Fauna Database Officer. to the November meeting to explain and demonstrate the database developed by WIRES.

### 5.1.3 Species guidelines – priority and assistance

Discussion focused on the **Capture and Relocate Licence (Reptiles)**, Concern was expressed about individuals offering courses (one is charging **\$3000**) and participants then applying to DEC for the Capture and Relocate Licence.

### 5.2 Budget Review

It was agreed that the AGM would include a planning session to provide a basis for reviewing the current budget and foreshadowing more realistic budget requirements for 2006-7.

### 5.3 NSW Wildlife Survey Koala Records - Payment

Stan had negotiated with Dan Lunney use of Council member groups' koala data. Due to serious time constraints on the understood provision of statistics, misunderstanding regarding the extent of data required may have arisen.

**Action: Stan Wood** will follow up with the groups which have not yet submitted records.

### 5.4 AGM – Venue and arrangements

The weekend of November.11-12 at The Centre, Randwick, was proposed.

**Action: Stan Wood** to book The Centre and organize participants' accommodation.

**Stan Wood** moved and **Alan Rose** seconded that the Council pay catering and accommodation costs for the AGM.

**Motion carried**

**Sonja Elwood** moved and **Lorraine Vass** seconded that alternates be invited to the AGM.

**Motion carried.**

### 5.5 Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc.

The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia has requested Council membership. The request had to be denied because the Society does not fulfill the established criteria. However, the Council favours forming alliances and networks with groups such as the Society.

It was unanimously agreed that the Society's National President, Patrick Medway, be invited to be guest speaker at the Council's inaugural AGM.

**Action: Secretary** to write to the Society accordingly.

In regard to a side discussion about Glen Innes Wildlife Carers enquiring about Council membership, Alan Rose was advised that they need to put the request in writing through the Secretary.

**Action: Alan Rose** to advise Glen Innes Wildlife Carers of the procedure.

### 5.6 Statewide Telephone Number

Audrey initiated discussion about the pros and cons of a statewide number and whether its funding should be pursued with the Minister.

It was agreed that a plan of approach including proposed operation, implementation and costings needs to be prepared. [No action assigned to this item].

### 5.7 Secretary - Leave of absence 23 Aug - 13 Oct

Leave granted.

**Joan Hills** moved and **Gwen Parry-Jones** seconded that Rick Vass be requested to check the NWC Post Box while the Secretary is away and forward anything deemed significant to the Chair.

**Motion carried**

## **6. Correspondence**

### **6.1 & 6.2 Outward & Inward correspondence**

**Alan Rose** moved and **Stan Wood** seconded that the Outgoing Correspondence be endorsed and the Inward Correspondence be received

**Motion carried**

## **7.0 Other Business**

### **7.1 Insurance**

If the insurance (proposed at the beginning of the meeting) goes ahead that member groups be asked to pay a percentage of the insurance costs as a fee.

**Action: Secretary** to list this as an agenda item for the November meeting

### **7.2 Government Subsidisation**

An email tabled from NRWC member Shaunti Kiehl proposed that the Council pursue government subsidisation for wildlife carers similar to those carers providing services to humans.

### **7.3 Announcement: Environmental Defender's Office has opened an office in Lismore.**

Copies of the Office's 2006 publication, *Rural Landholder's Guide to Environmental Law in New South Wales*, were distributed. Contact Lorraine or the Office for additional copies.

### **7.4 Promoting NWC with Media and Organisational Newsletters**

Stan Wood suggested that the Media Officer draws up guidelines for this purpose.

### **7.5 Presentation by Dr Dan Lunney, Principal Research Scientist DEC and Vertebrate Ecology Team Leader, with Ian Shannon, Team Statistician and Jessica Bryant, Project Officer**

*"Realising the potential of carer records to contribute to the conservation of wildlife in NSW – An ecologist's perspective"*

Notes from presentation:

Regarding the recent Statewide Wildlife Survey, Koalas were chosen as the key species for communicating the value of carers to society because :

1. National iconic species
2. Threatened species in NSW
3. Sufficient records to contribute to wildlife management in NSW

Koalas were collared after the 1994 fires in Port Stephens. Two thirds of the fire victims that went into care died (the other third bred). At first glance, this does not look like a very positive outcome. However, in a koala population in a non-fire affected area, the mortality rate was found to be the same. Why?

There are lessons to be learned from wildlife carers' records and they will certainly contribute to the soon to be published statewide recovery plan for koalas as well as the way in which information about the State's wildlife will be collected in the future.

Eleven groups have been identified as collecting koala records.

Realising the potential of carer records, a number of attributes need to be recorded by carers, they are:

Standardised information (eg common codes). Minimum Data Requirements

- Species
- Sex
- Date
- Location found (description & spatially represented)
- Cause
- Problems
- Weight
- Carrying young?
- Fate/Outcome

Optional Extra Information would include:

- Animals killed, but not recorded (eg Road Kill, Fire etc), therefore not entered into care, but could go into records to identify species, date, location under heading of Causes.
- Recording Geographic location of rescue/dead using GPS unit, or recording key sites in area using GPS (eg once a year)
- Photographs of site of rescue – to help interpret underlying causes
- Area over which searches take place & records kept on an annual basis (eg has area altered between years?)

What we have gleaned from records so far:

- High degree of difference in nature of record systems across care groups
- This makes regional comparisons difficult
- Of all 11 groups (recorded as koala care), only 3 have provided records that are capable of analysis.

Current Community Survey

- App 214,000 surveys distributed across rural NSW
- People liked the Map so were not sending in responses, so offered a souvenir map to people who returned them (roughly 90% of responders took up this offer)
- Work still in progress

Advantages of Community Survey Data

- Records on private land without intrusion
- Involves community in conservation/wildlife management
- Ability to detect species that are not detectable in standard scientific surveys
- Simultaneous state-wide snapshot of distribution
- No alternative methods for determining distribution of species that are not of special interest
- Rare sightings (eg quolls west of Dubbo - it was a roadkill))

Limitations of Community Wildlife Survey

- Accuracy of location
- Reliability of species identification
- Reflects distribution of people, not wildlife
- Subjectivity of comments/perceptions

- Results likely to reflect visibility rather than presence
- Influenced by attitude to wildlife conservation
- Likely to souvenir map rather than return it
- Poor memory of past compared with current leading to more records of last 2 years than previously, even for declining species
- Danger of confusing abundance with distribution in interpretation
- Errors in layout of questionnaire/map
- No obvious next scientific step in use of results

#### Wildlife Care Records: Strengths

- Good distribution of records
- Dates of locality records
- Identification of problems eg cars, fires, disease
- Can follow trends over years
- Can compare between regions
- Mortality records available
- Can relate demographic attributes (age, sex) to records eg young males dying in spring

#### Wildlife Care Records: Limitations

- Only shows distribution of sick and injured
- Does not pick up all threats equally eg Dog attacks underestimated
- Gaps in record keeping give misleading trends
- Carer groups not evenly distributed across range of each species (eg koala groups concentrated where koala populations are concentrated)
- Danger of identifying major problems for koalas as being those that come into care (eg habitat loss a major problem not reflected in carer records)
- Carer records tend to reflect secondary threats after an area is degraded (eg housing/highways)
- Focus on large native species and rarely on feral pests (eg fox)

#### Discussion from presentation:

How many responses from public?

About 15,000 -1/3 of the responders had seen Koalas – significant indicator of widespread distribution.

The Department's *Atlas of NSW Wildlife* is alive and well. It is important that wildlife rehabilitators' records are added to the Atlas. Most are not.

Audrey Koosmen asked for a list of those groups that have responded so that NWC can target the ones that have not.

**Action: Stan Wood** to liaise with Dan and Jessica.

**Meeting Close 4:15pm**