

NSW Wildlife Council, Inc.

Meeting Number 7, Saturday 9 June 2007 at 9.30am

The Centre, 14 Frances Street, Randwick

Minutes

1. Opening of Meeting: Welcome

The Chair welcomed participants, acknowledging the bad weather which was expected to delay a couple of representatives and had prevented others from attending. A particular welcome was extended to John Gorham, representing FAWNA, alternates Julia McConnell and Greg Tarlinton and observer, Shirley Lack from the Native Animal Rescue Group.

1.1 Present: Audrey Koosmen (Chair), NATF; Stan Wood, (Vice Chair) WIRES; Lorraine Vass (Secretary) FOK; Joan Hills (Treasurer) WCN-Central West ; Sandra Stewart, (Media Officer) IGL; Steve Amesbury, Native Animal Network; Ilona Roberts, Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers; Chris Neville, Wildlife Aid; John Gorham, FAWNA; Julia McConnell (IGL alternate); Coralie Tarlinton, Wildcare; Greg Tarlinton (Wildcare alternate); Gwen Seznec, NRWC (from 10.55am); Don Gowing (Wildlife ARC alternate, from 11.25am); Gwen Parry-Jones, Wildlife ARC (from lunch time). Shirley Lack, observing for Native Animal Rescue Group.

1.2 Apologies: Paul McLeod, Barbara Witham (Koalas in Care), Carol Rose (Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers); Ronny Ling (ORRCA); Sonja Elwood, Helen Kennedy (Sydney Wildlife); Jill Taylor (Hunter Koala Preservation Society).

2. Register of Proxies: None

3. Report of Executive Meeting held 7 June 2007 at 3.30pm, The Centre

The Secretary read the draft Minutes (see attached).

Business arising:

Item 10: Insurance claims (see also item 4.1.1 below)

Chris Neville **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that insurance claims made by individuals be assessed in the first instance by their group and then forwarded to the Council via the Secretary to the Insurance Contact Officer.

Motion carried

Stan Wood reiterated Wires' offer of its Head Office for maintaining contact with AON.

Coralie Tarlinton **moved** and Chris Neville **seconded** that Julia McConnell assumes the position of Insurance Contact Officer, the duties of which will include all contact with AON and advising member groups in writing of the process for lodging insurance claims (including product disclosure and client summary coverage documentation).

Motion Carried

Action: Secretary to advise AON of the change of Insurance Contact Officer and forward to Julia a copy of the product disclosure and client summary coverage documentation, together with a membership address list and a copy of the covering letter to members dated 5 January 2007.

4. Re-ordering of Business

It was agreed to bring forward discussion of item **5.1**: DECC Licensing issues to the end of Business Arising.

5. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting Number 6 held Wednesday 14 February 2007

(circulated by email)

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

Motion carried

5.1 Business Arising

5.1.1 Statewide Insurance

No further discussion from item 3 above.

5.1.2 Review of Constitution (**Stan Wood**)

Stan Wood apologized for circulating the penultimate version of the Constitution prior to the meeting and displayed the correct version electronically, drawing attention to the areas he had amended including the name of the public fund, the NSW Wildlife Council Public Gift Fund. Stan Wood **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that the preferred term for references to Committee throughout the Constitution be Executive.

Motion carried

Stan Wood **moved** and Sandra Stewart **seconded** the adoption of Clause 38: NWC Public Gift Fund as presented.

Motion carried

Stan Wood **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** the adoption of Clause 16: Election of Members as presented.

Motion carried

Members have 21 days in which to advise Stan of further amendments. The revised document will then be re-circulated for ratification at the October meeting.

The Chair thanked Stan for the work he has put into the Constitution over the past 18 months.

5.1.3 NWC Logo update

It was agreed that no further action be taken at this time.

5.1.4 NSW Wildlife Survey – Koala Records – Meeting with Project Leader, Dan Lunney; Payment, etc.

The meeting with Dan Lunney did not clarify the confusion that some members are under regarding payment of the records that were forwarded to the NSW Wildlife Survey on species other than the koala

Action: Chair to contact Dan or Jessica to confirm which records on which DECC made payment.

5.1.5 Working parties (Flying Fox; Research & Statistics, Education) - terms of references

It was agreed to incorporate discussion on this item with **7.9: Realistic goal setting**

5.1.6 List of NSW Wildlife Trainers (**Coralie Tarlinton**)

Coralie tabled the draft she had drawn up from information submitted by some member groups. She will tidy up the formatting etc. for signing off via the discussion list after which the document will be put on the Council's website as a training resource.

7.1 [5.1] DECC Licensing issues

The Chair reported briefly on the meeting held 1 May 2007 with A/Manager, Wildlife Licensing & Management Unit, Geoff Ross and Licensing Officer, Alan McLean

- Insurance – no real on-going commitment
- Boundaries – map promised
- Licensing – no responsibility for mediation/negotiation.

Chair raised shortcomings in the process for new applications, in particular the disrespect to some existing groups and individuals by lack of consultation.

The Vice Chair reiterated that problems associated with licensing decisions are being replicated, possibly because the Department is unaware of its own licensing

- boundaries decisions. The situation of some stakeholder groups being consulted but others are not is adding to an already confusing situation.
- Notes of the meeting made by DECC not yet received.

Representatives were asked to clarify where members stand on the Department's existing licensing policy and whether they stood by the resolution passed at the February meeting: *that a letter be written to the Minister for the Environment and copied to the Director General DEC stating that the Council's position on licensing applications is that DEC be supported and resourced to implement its existing policies without political interference. The Council is appreciative of any opportunity for consultation and wishes to have input into policy development and guidelines which might arise through the review in progress. The letter should also mention the need for boundaries clarification.*

Around the table, WIRES, NANA NRWC, FAWNA, FOK, NATF, Wildlife Aid, WCN-Central West confirmed their fundamental support for the existing policy, although several expressed dissatisfaction with the application of the policy.

TVWC, Wildcare and the Independent Licencees also stated their support for the existing policy, qualified by varying degrees of boundaries flexibility to take account of 'exceptional circumstances'. One group, Wildlife ARC expressed strong objection to boundaries as artificial restrictions to group membership.

This range of views was summarized as broad support for a possibly imperfect policy which is inconsistently applied. A minority view believes that boundaries need investigation.

At this point DECC guests, Mick O'Flynn and Ron Haering joined the Council for lunch.

Address by Mick O'Flynn, Manager, Conservation Operations Section and Ron Haering, Manager, Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit, on issues raised for discussion by Council members.

Following the Chair's warm welcome, Mick thanked the Council for the opportunity to participate in the meeting. He said that the Department is very supportive of the Council and its role, acknowledging it as a significant partner that will continue to grow in importance over time. The immense voluntary effort represented by the licensed groups is well understood and respected within the Department although its policies and actions may not always appear to reflect appreciation.

Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit

The Unit, combining licensing and wildlife management is relatively new. It numbers about eight officers, most of whom are involved with licensing issues, including animal keeping. The wildlife management aspect includes policy development, species plans and education. With Ron's appointment and his background in co-ordinating threatened species recovery plans a renewed emphasis on the Unit's management of wildlife activities can be expected.

The Conservation Operations Section sits in the Reserve and Wildlife Conservation Branch of the Parks and Wildlife Division and works closely with the regional branches for service delivery. It comprises seven units of which Wildlife Licensing and Management interacts with Conservation Partnerships (Greening Australia, Wildlife Refuges, etc.), Fire Management and Pest Management.

Licensing and the Fauna Rehabilitation Policy

The *Rehabilitation of Fauna Policy* dates from 2001. It was scheduled for review in June 2005. The decision to conduct a wider review of the Department's wildlife management activities, completion of which is planned for mid-2008, has held up the review of the fauna rehabilitation policy.

On receipt of an application the Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit co-ordinates advice from the appropriate regional office before reaching a decision. There has been no intention by the Department not to apply the policy as it stands. There is acknowledgement that some decisions have lacked judgment and are cause for concern. The policy does not provide for seeking advice outside the Department. Under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* the Minister has the final say in licensing matters.

Mick and Ron are prepared to carry out an audit of the application of the policy over recent years and to recommend that the review of the fauna rehabilitation policy be brought forward.

The Department wishes to move away from the present regulatory relationship and seeks input from the Council on the advice required to assist sound decision-making.

Discussion included:

- Strengthening guidelines and implementing procedures
- Consistency of regional office involvement
- Consistency of consultation with existing groups
- Strengthening mediation processes
- Standards for accreditation
- Some boundaries flexibility (minority view)

There was agreement that a procedures analysis would be brought back to the Council's October meeting. The Council will have opportunity for input to the review by submission on a discussion paper to be circulated and perhaps workshopped.

Insurance coverage

Despite the request made of the retiring Minister, there is no budget allocation for on-going insurance coverage.

Regional Offices

Under the existing policy regional offices have no minimum support obligations to wildlife rehabilitation groups.

NSW Wildlife Survey

The Survey originated from seed-funding for the Koala Recovery Plan, to identify extension of the koala's habitat range that has occurred over the past 20 years. Additional funding was made available to extend the species coverage, including pest species. The Survey is now expected to be published in 2008.

Licensing and role of Relocation Professionals

(process for issuing licences to pest controllers)

Taken on notice.

NSW Wildlife Atlas

Delays in including entries occur because the Unit is small and it receives data in many formats and imperfectly presented. Priority tends to be given to entering data that is in the form required and or deals with a threatened species.

Species Recovery Plans

Redundancies, restructuring and the review of state environmental planning policies have all contributed to the delay in the Draft Koala Recovery Plan's publication. The 2003 submissions are currently being re-assessed and it is hoped that the Plan will be signed off by the end of 2007.

Regional Strategy Plans

No experience in this area.

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The Act is undergoing periodic (5-year) review. The draft Regulation which will include the miscellaneous amendments is expected to go on public exhibition in early 2008.

Culling, Relocation Licences – Process for Issuing Local Area Licences

Taken on notice.

Capacity Building

(training to improve the Council's effectiveness as a peak body)

Taken on notice.

The Chair thanked Mick and Ron for their attendance and the re-ordered business resumed.

6. Reports

6.1 Treasurer

The Treasurer tabled her report comprising receipts and payment journals for the period 10 February 2007 to 31 May 2007 and an accounts reconciliation. The closing book balance of \$20,789.36 was noted. It was agreed that un-presented cheque no 1006, issued 28 August 2006 in the amount of \$74.50 to Sandra Stewart be cancelled and re-issued.

Payment was authorized for reimbursements in the amount of \$1656.76 (the revised total including expenses associated with the June meeting to be presented on Sunday 10 June).

Joan Hills **moved** and Stan Wood **seconded** that the Treasurer's report be received and noted and that reimbursement claims presented to the meeting be authorized for payment. **Motion Carried**

6.2 Ratification of Bank Signatories

Steve Amesbury **moved** and Ilona Roberts **seconded** that pursuant to the election of office bearers at the February meeting, Joan Hills be added to the list of signatories to the Council's operating account held at ANZ Hurstville and that Sonja Elwood no longer be a signatory to that account. **Motion Carried**

6.3 Endorsement of Loss of Salary Claim – Sandra Stewart

Stan Wood **moved** and Chris Neville **seconded** that on presentation of the appropriate documentation from the NSW Department of Education and Training, Sandra Stewart be reimbursed for salary lost on Friday 8 June 2007 in order to attend the scheduled meeting with the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change. **Motion Carried**

6.4 2007-8 Draft Budget

Stan Wood **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that the 2007- 8 draft budget presented to the meeting be immediately forwarded to the Director General, Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Motion Carried

7. General Business

7.2 National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association (US): Code of Ethics

Two minor amendments were agreed to: (a) reference to *wild animals* in clauses 2 and 10 be changed to *native fauna*; (b) clause 4 to have the words *and practice* inserted between establish and safe and to end after conditions.

John Gorham **moved** and Stan Wood **seconded** that the NWC adopt the US National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association's Code of Ethics as modified and with the amendments referred to above and that members of the NWC be encouraged to adopt or endorse the Code. **Motion Carried**

7.3 Sponsorship options for NWC members' rescue hotlines

It was agreed to take up the offer made by WIRES to explore with Telstra options for lowering telephone costs associated with wildlife rehabilitation, either by sponsored single customer arrangements or the development of sponsored individual plans for wildlife rehabilitation groups or individual rehabilitators..

7.4 Threatened species legislation reforms

Item withdrawn.

7.5 Free pre-Lyssavirus inoculations

The estimated cost of inoculation of bat-carers across the state is \$20,000. The possible inclusion of the pre-Lyssavirus inoculations to the current NWC budget submission to DECC was withdrawn.

7.6 Federal Government's 2005 Grey Headed Flying Foxes count

It was noted that both Federal and State governments have been advised of discrepancies in the 2005 Grey Headed Flying Foxes Count.

7.7 Nature Conservation Council: draft position paper on Part 3A, NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

It was agreed that the NCC be asked whether legal opinion had been sought in the formulation of the draft position paper.

Action: NCC Contact to make request.

7.8 000 Animal Rescue Service

Action: The Chair will investigate and report back.

7.9 Realistic Goal Setting

It was agreed to include strategic planning in the October meetings. The intended discussion of the Working Parties (Flying Fox; Research & Statistics, Education) - terms of references did not take place.

8. Correspondence

8.1 & 8.2 Outgoing and Incoming Correspondence

Lorraine Vass **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that incoming correspondence be received and outgoing correspondence be endorsed. **Motion Carried**

9. Other Business

9.1 Confirmation of Reimbursement Protocols

It was confirmed that expenses associated with meeting attendance would be paid to one representative only from each member group.

9.2 Confidentiality of Council Business

The Chair voiced her concern about leaks of Council business to the wildlife community at large as well as hurtful statements being made about colleagues. She urged care in the use of email and the special need for mutual respect in unsettled times.

10. Future Meeting Date: Ordinary Meeting no 8 and AGM: 27/8 October 2007

11. Meeting closed at 5.20pm