

NSW Wildlife Council, Inc.

General Meeting Number 17

Thursday 20 May 2010 at 9.40am

Department of Environment Climate Change & Water
Bridge Street, Hurstville

Minutes

1. Meeting open and Welcome

1.1 Present: Audrey Koosmen (Chair) NATF; Stan Wood (Vice Chair) WIRES; Shirley Lack (Secretary and Insurance Officer) NARG, Julia McConnell (Treasurer) IGL, Marny Bonner ASR, Elena Guarracino (Media Officer and Revenue Officer) SONA, Lorraine Vass (Minute Secretary) FOK, Philip Machin NARG (Alt.), Ian Gowanloch SONA (Alt.), John Meany NANA, Georgie Whaley NRWC; Coralie Tarlinton Wildcare Qbn., Shona Lorigan ORRCA (Alt.), Brian Chetwynd NTWC, Andrew Burton Wildlife Aid, Peter Daniels, Corrective Services NSW Wildlife Care Centre, Ilona Roberts TVWC, Greg Peterson Sydney Wildlife, James Fitzgerald LAOKO.

1.2 Apologies: Greg Tarlinton Wildcare Qbn (Alt.), Ronnie Ling ORRCA, Cheryl Cochrane NRWC (Alt.), Helen Kennedy, Sydney Wildlife, John Gorham FAWNA Gwen Parry-Jones Wildlife ARC; Jan Brazel Wildlife ARC (Alt.), Sally Jacka TVWC (Alt.), Helen Kennedy, Sydney Wildlife (Alt.), Damien Brell, Wildlife Aid (Alt.), Cheyne Flanagan, Koala Preservation Society of NSW, Page Sinclair, Pet Porpoise Pool, John Mostyn IGL (Alt.).

1.3 Teleconferencing: Jill Taylor Hunter Koala Preservation Society

1.4 Guests in attendance: Miranda Gott (DECCW), Daniel Van Dyk (DECCW), Ron Haering (DECCW)

2. Register of Proxies: None

3. Guest speakers and presentations

3.1: Draft Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy: Dr Miranda Gott, and Dr Daniel van Dyk, DECCW

See Attachment 1 (pp.7-10)

3.2: Parks & Wildlife Group Restructure: Mr Ron Haering, Manager, Wildlife Licensing and Management Unity, DECCW

(See separate attachments Organisational Chart and Map)

4. Confirmation of Minutes of General Meeting no. 16 held 24 March 2010

4.1. John Meany moved and **Brian Chetwynd** seconded adoption of the draft Minutes of meeting number 16 held on 24 March 2010. **Carried**

4.2. Business arising

4.2.1 Meeting with the Hon. Frank Sartor, MP NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment

Tentative arrangements for the first or second week of July have been discussed with Ministerial staff. The delegation will comprise the NWC Executive.

Action: Chair to confirm date and members of the delegation with Minister's office.

4.2.2. Native Animal Keepers Consultative Committee

Stan Wood who represents WIRES on the Committee reported there had been no meeting of the Committee held since February 2010.

Action: Minute Secretary to remove from the agenda until a further meeting of the native Animal Keepers Consultative Committee is held.

4.2.3. NSW Wildlife State Emergency – NWC Capability & Major Incident Response

The Chair has contacted the Department of Primary Industry and Investment (DPII) regarding their interest in holding a meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest and benefit including Council members' involvement in and preparedness for dealing with wildlife affected by natural disasters. Arrangements for the proposed meeting have not progressed due to the Chair's inability to contact John Gorham for a suitable date.

Actions: John Gorham to contact Chair with suitable dates for arranging the meeting with DPII and Chair to arrange meeting.

4.2.4 Hunting in National Parks

Stan Wood commented that although the outcry from the conservation sector in 2009 had succeeded in stopping the introduction of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill* for the present it should be regarded as 'on hold' rather than having been comprehensively dealt with as it is likely to be resurrected in the future.

Action: Minute Secretary to remove from the agenda unless and until the issue arises again.

4.2.5. Statewide Database

In light of the inconclusive recollections around the table of the Council's progress with the shared database project it was agreed that the Minute Secretary review past minutes and summarise developments to create an accurate basis on which to proceed.

The Treasurer confirmed that the special purpose grant of \$5,000 is still available.

Action: Minute Secretary to review past minutes to create a paper-trail for the database project.

4.2.6. Members' Boundary Maps

Andrew Burton reported that 14 of the 25 groups which are on the NWC discussion list had reported receiving the maps. 12 groups had provided comments on accuracy.

Action: Groups who have yet to comment on the boundary maps to do so directly to Andrew as soon as possible for him to forward to DECCW.

4.2.7 Actions from March meeting

All but one action from the March meeting is completed.

Actions: Stan Wood to circulate the WIRES Incident Report Form for other groups to adapt if they choose. (See March agenda item **5.2 Insurance Officer's Report**)

Minute Secretary to create an action list from future meeting minutes to be circulated with the minutes.

5. Reports

5.1. Treasurer's Report

Julia spoke to her report, recommending that further to the Council meeting the costs for the Chair to attend the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference which was agreed to at the March meeting, that the costs of executive members, Shirley Lack and Elena Guarracino, also be met. It was noted that the Chair's attendance is now being covered by a grant of up to \$1600 from IFAW and that Elena plans to stay with family.

Julia also recommended the contribution of \$500 to the Wombat Protection Society of Australia for costs associated with mounting the 2011 Wombat Conference which had the approval of the Executive and which some members had supported by email.

Julia further advised that due to lack of activity during 2009-2010 the budget is showing a surplus which could be used to contract implementation of some tasks from the Strategic Plan.

Stan Wood moved and **Andrew Burton** seconded that the Council meets costs associated with the attendance at the 7th National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in Adelaide of Shirley Lack, Secretary and Elena Guarracino, Revenue and Media Officer and contributes \$500 towards the costs of mounting the 2011 Wombat Conference being organized by the Wombat Protection Society of Australia. **Carried.**

In relation to the final item Julia reported on, funding from the RTA, she noted that third and last payment of \$20,000 for the current triennium is now received. Negotiations for the 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 Triennium are proceeding on the basis of an annual payment of \$45,000 and a more transparent partnership based on a MoU for which the RTA will provide the template. The Council must write to the RTA providing documentation about its progress and aspirations to support its need for the higher level of funding.

The Chair noted that road clearance and floppy-top fence maintenance have been identified by the RTA as issues of interest to be included in the MOU. The Council will also publicise the RTA's wildlife protection initiatives on its website and in newsletters.

It was also noted that a similar MoU is to be progressed with DECCW.

Actions: The Executive to prepare and forward the documentation to support its need for higher funding from the RTA during the 2010/2011-2012/2013 Triennium.

The Council and member groups to promote the RTA's wildlife initiatives as appropriate.

The Executive to negotiate a MoU with the appropriate DECCW officers.

5.1.1 Statement of Accounts

Expenditure of \$5,060.18 was noted for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010.

5.1.2 Approval for Expense Reimbursements

Representatives may claim for reimbursement of out of pocket expenses incurred in meeting attendance, namely fares (or fuel) and accommodation if it is impossible to arrive and depart on the day of the meeting. Receipts must be forwarded attached to the Council's reimbursement form.

John Meany moved and **Coralie Tarlinton** seconded that claims for reimbursements to be

lodged by Marny Bonner, Lorraine Vass, Brian Chetwynd, Julia McConnell, James Fitzgerald, Georgie Whaley, Coralie Tarlinton, Sally Jacka, Shirley Lack, Elena Guarracino and Cooma Trophy & Gift Centre be approved for payment. **Carried.**

5.1.3 Authorised Account Signatories

Secretary, Shirley Lack, has been added to the list of authorized signatories to the Council's bank account.

Action: Julia to confirm enactment before August meeting.

Georgie Whaley moved and **Coralie Tarlinton** seconded that the Treasurer's Report, comprising payments, receipts, balance statement and expenditure against budget from 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010, be adopted and the alteration of the account signatories actioned. **Carried**

5.2 Insurance Officer's Report

Shirley reported that Aon Risk Services Australia has issued a cover note while finalizing invoicing arrangements. A Certificate of Currency in the name of the NSW Wildlife Council Inc. is available but individual group details will not be possible until the invoice is paid.

All groups who have expressed interest in taking out D&O cover have sent in the required paperwork.

Full detail of all policies is available electronically from the Insurance Officer on request

All members were reminded they should submit reports to the Insurance Officer of any incident that could potentially result in a claim. Claims and incident reports must be forwarded by members' insurance contacts and not the individual involved.

No claims have been acted on although several incidents have been reported.

5.3 Media Officer's Report

Elena reported action on scheduled logging of koala habitat in the Southeast Forests and the Ministerial decision on dispersal of flying foxes from the Royal Botanical Gardens. In both cases media release were issued but no interviews resulted.

Timing is critical and the Council usually finds itself piggy-backing on organisations such as NCC or the grass roots groups involved. Elena asked that species specialists make themselves known to her and thanked Ilona Roberts and Lorraine Vass for their input and assistance.

5.4. Revenue Officer's Report (including outcome of the meeting between the NWC Executive and the RTA , notes and actions of which were previously circulated)

Ellie spoke to her tabled report, drawing particular attention to the documentation required by the RTA to justify their continuing financial support, and the Centre for Volunteering's report on *Reimbursement and Value of Volunteer Effort Research*, in which the paid equivalent value of volunteer roles was determined at around \$30 per hour.

5.5. Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) Report

Lorraine advised that the Council had appointed a new CEO, Pepe Clark who would take up his position in June and the campaign being mounted on saving the Southeastern Forests, including the logging of koala habitat and the renewed assault by the woodchip industry.

5.6 Secretary's Report (including significant correspondence)

Shirley read out the 11 items of incoming correspondence received and the 9 items of outgoing correspondence

Two items were discussed:

(a) the request from the National Parks Foundation to add the NWC logo to their website. As the Foundation was unknown to a few members it was decided to defer consideration of the request.

Action: John Meany to research the National Parks Foundation's purpose, credentials etc. and report to the Council's general meeting in August.

(b) advice by member group Wildlife Arc of interference of one member group in the internal affairs of another group. The Chair clarified that the matter under discussion was the business of two member groups on the Central Coast and ruled that it was not the business of the Council. There was agreement that the Secretary's response would refer the parties to the NWC Conflict Resolution Guidelines

Elena Guarracino moved and **Julia McConnell** seconded receipt of the inward correspondence and endorsement of the outgoing correspondence. **Carried**

6. General Business

6.1 Draft Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy

The Chair directed discussion of this item be held over and be the concluding item of business.

6.2 Funding Proposals – direction of Revenue Officer

Elena spoke to her previously circulated proposal (see Funding Proposal – Department of Primary Industries/Animal Welfare grants, March 2010) to write to the Minister for Primary Industries, (who also holds the Emergency Services and Rural Affairs portfolios) with a project proposal to investigate and review existing capacity for a large-scale (state-wide) wildlife disaster response and implementation of the strategies identified in the review.

Action: Members interested in making input into preparing the project outline are asked to liaise with the Revenue Officer.

6.3 Future National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conferences

Lorraine spoke to her ideas paper circulated prior to the meeting. A few ideas were put forward including periodic comprehensive national conferences interspersed with annual State/single species conferences. There was also a suggestion to defer further discussion until the end of the state circuit which would be 2012 in Tasmania.

Action: Any ideas to be feedback to the Minute Secretary for preparation of a position to be taken to Adelaide.

6.4 EPBC ACT Nomination – Koala

Lorraine reminded those groups that have a particular interest in Koala that the deadline for submissions on the nomination prepared for the Threatened Species Scientific Committee's consideration is 9 July 2010.

She pointed out her concerns that the Committee had formed no view as to whether the koala is eligible for listing, or which category of listing would be appropriate – suggesting either 'vulnerable' or 'conservation dependent'. The former requires an action which significantly impacts on the species protected by the Act be given ministerial consent; the latter does not.

7. Other Business

7.1. Review of Position Descriptions

It was noted that office-bearers have no specific delegated authority. It agreed that the Executive would review the position description (member, office-bearers and named positions) which were last revised on 14 February 2007 and circulate to members for discussion at the August General Meeting.

Action: Executive to review, revise and circulate position descriptions.

7.2 Reptile Quarantine

Julia tabled a 10-point discussion paper and background to the issue of reptile quarantine, expressing concern about the passing of reptiles between licensed and illegal keepers which she believes is causing serious health considerations in reptiles, and the potential contamination of wild populations. She referred to the *Hygiene protocol for the control of disease in captive snakes* (NSW DEC 2004), questioning whether the protocol is known about, much less applied.

Action: Julia to seek input from interested members, including Coralie Tarlinton, Stan Wood, Greg Peterson and Andrew Burton to make input to a submission to be drafted by her (including the tabled papers) to the Manager, Wildlife Licensing & Management Unit suggesting the formation of a working party of relevant stakeholders to address reptile quarantine.

7.3 Tourism in National Parks

Lorraine drew attention to the Minister's intention to introduce the draft *National Parks & Wildlife Amendment (Sustainable Tourism) Bill 2010* into the House during the current sitting.

Matter arising

Ian Gowanloch requested that the Council revisit its position on the *Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2009*

Following lively discussion on the efficacy of shooting individual feral animals versus inherently in-humane culling there was agreement that the issue of the impact of feral animals in wildlife rehabilitation be listed on the agenda for the August General Meeting.

Action: Secretary to list the topic and members prepare to discuss their position on controlling feral animals in the national park estate.

7.4 NSW Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Nomination

Brian Chetwynd tabled a notice from the *Daily Telegraph*, 12 May 2010 inviting membership of the above Panel until 2 July 2010.

Action: Secretary to enquire about membership.

7.5 Publication – *A guide to private conservation in NSW*

Lorraine tabled the guide which has been recently published by the Environmental Defender's Office. Free copies are available from the EDO's Sydney and Northern Rivers offices (see also www.edo.org.au/edonsw)

7.6 [6.1] Draft Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy

Discussion of the Draft Policy followed on from the presentation by DECCW officers earlier in the meeting which, in part, summarized group and individual submissions (See attachment 1 below).

Phil opened the NWC discussion by referring to shortcomings of the consultation process over the past year, particularly the short period of time given for consideration, and the implications which the Draft Policy has for the Council and its member groups. Whilst he acknowledged that some groups supported the Draft others wanted a more flexible policy that allow for different situations across the State.

Several members spoke strongly in support of the Draft.

Brian drew attention to officers' interest in 'exceptional circumstances' noting that no criteria had been provided. He advocated the Council exploring further the possibility of accommodating individual circumstances through requesting and examining the referred to *WLMU procedures for exceptional circumstances criteria*. If DECCW can find a way to broaden the criteria it may provide the means for different models to be deployed, thereby retaining as many rehabilitators as possible.

Brian Chetwynd moved and **James Fitzgerald** seconded that NWC further considers the Draft Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna Policy, requesting a copy of the *WLMU procedures for exceptional circumstances criteria* and seeking an extension of time of 30 days to enable more members to make submissions and the Council to continue its representations on the Draft Policy. Carried

Actions: Those groups intending to prepare submissions or making additional submissions to notify Chair

Chair authorized to convey the above motion to the appropriate DECCW officers.

8. Future Meetings

The 18th General Meeting and the 5th Annual General Meeting will be held on 28 and 29 August respectively at The Centre, Randwick

Speakers suggested for the AGM were Kevin Roberts, Senior Environmental Specialist – Biodiversity and Josie Stokes, Environment Officer Biodiversity - RTA and a senior DECCW officer in the areas of partnerships or Tourism.

Actions: Members to advise Stan Wood of accommodation requirements.
Chair to finalise and invite speakers

Meeting closed at approx. 4.40pm

Attachment 1

Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water NSW DRAFT FAUNA REHABILITATION POLICY - Consultation with NWC Presentation outline provided by Daniel Van Dyk

Introduction

- 28 rehabilitation groups with over 4,600 members (20 generalist, 8 specialist)
- 4 zoological parks
- 28 individuals
- 8 groups provided feedback (~70% of sector)
- 20 individuals provided feedback (mixture of group members, IGL holders and unlicensed)

Overall

- 6 groups supported the general policy direction
- 1 group felt unable to comment
- 1 group and 6 individuals criticised the policy for mandating a 'one size fits all' approach
- 2 individuals thought the policy was unfair, unjust and left an 'uneven playing field'.
- 1 individual thought the policy strengthened the *status quo* giving even more power to those who already have it and ensuring continuing unrest

Objectives

- Reflects DECCW's needs rather than the broader wildlife rehabilitation community (1 G)
- Add the maintenance of a stable regulatory environment as an objective (1 G)

Definitions and licensing

- Koala guidelines are missing (2 G)
- Add WLMU's role in reviewing and rescinding licences (1 G)
- Add definition of an authorised member (DECCW)

Oversight – Regional involvement

- Agrees and looks forward to its implementation (1 G)
- Commends policy with regard to increased oversight of groups by PWG (1 I)

Issuing group licences I

- Call for applications is absurd; why wait for PWG to identify a need? (1 G)
- Call for applications process basically denies new licences and will cause a loss of rehabilitators from the field (1 I)
- Complaints about service provision should precipitate the granting of new group licences (1 I)
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Issuing group licences II

- Pre-conditions for new groups should be moved to 'selection criteria' so they can be regularly updated (1 I)
- There shouldn't be a membership size pre-condition (1 I)
- Lack of privacy is a concern; giving permission for information to be released to 3rd parties is an unnecessary/illegal imposition (2 I)

Issuing group licences III

- Strongly support the existing system of geographically constrained licences (1G)
- Groups should be able to authorise members anywhere/Rehabilitators should be free to be authorised by any group (1 G, 16 I)
- Put 'exceptional circumstances' criteria in policy (DECCW)

Issuing group licences IV

- An exception to the 'one authority' rule should be made when they don't overlap (i.e. general authority and koala authority) (3 G)
- Multiple authorities per person should be allowed (1 G, 1 I)

Issuing individual licences

- This perpetuates a 'class system' whereby those with IGLs are not bound by the same stringent requirements as group members (1 I)
- The compliance regime for IGLs is different from groups and should be the same (1 G)
- Training requirements for IGLs are different from groups and should be the same (1 G, 1 I)
- After some years of experience a rehabilitator should be able to get an IGL (1 G, 3 I)

Issuing zoo licences and vets

- Why are vets treated differently from all others with regard to training, assessment and inspections? (1 G)
- We would like to see training courses attended by vets and vet nurses (1 G)

Unreleasable fauna

- DECCW should not dictate the number of classes in an 'education program' (1 G, 2 I)
- The 'education program' clause limits the opportunities for people to receive training (1 I)
- The rules for escaped pets seems unnecessarily complicated (1 G)
- The 'companion animal' criteria should be deleted (1 G)
- DECCW officers should not have the power to dispose of fauna at their discretion (1 I)

Expenses

- Needs clarification so that PWG Regional grants can continue (3 G)
- Why shouldn't DECCW assist with expenses? (1 G)

Dispute management

- This section is not needed; these matters are addressed by the Office of Fair Trading (1 G)
- Agree with section; add reference to NWC conflict resolution guidelines (1 G)
- DECCW should take control of the groups and create a single constitution/dispute resolution process that is mandatory (1 I)

Information provision

- Information about individual licence holders should be placed on the DECCW website (1 I)

Regional engagement/assessment

- Agree with this section without exception (1 G)
- Supports increased interaction between PWG and groups and clarification of compliance roles (1 G)
- The time-frame for PWG engagement (3 years) is far too long; more frequent involvement is needed (1 G)
- The time-frame for PWG assessment (5 years) is a token gesture; Regional Managers will not have sufficient information to make an assessment (1 I)

Non-existent/insufficient services

- Unnecessary and convoluted (1 G)

Licence breaches

- Unnecessary (1 G)

Other I

- Consultation has been insufficient (1 G, 5 I)
- DECCW should require more public reporting from groups on matters of governance, members support and financial probity (1 I)
- Many people are now caring 'underground'; sadly many of these people have no training or experience (3 I)

Other II

- The map of group locations reveals an inconsistent approach; this will continue under the new policy (1 I)
- Training courses should be run by DECCW and involve a vet (1 I)
- Smaller groups of people in the same area may work better as they would be close by in the same neighbourhood (1 I)

Other III

- Some people get bullied by groups (1 I)
- Victoria has a better licensing system than NSW (2 I) 340 shelters and 360 foster carers