

Minutes

NSW Wildlife Council Inc.

General Meeting #28
28 May 2013
9.30am to 3pm
OEH Offices, Bridge Street Hurstville

MEETING OPEN: 0940

Chair welcomed members and guests, particularly Duan March and Ian McKenzie attending for the first time.

PRESENT: A. Koosmen NATF; G. Bartlett HKPS; M. Ryan FAWNA; J. McConnell IGLs; J. Mills WRSC; S. Lack NARG; P. Graham LAOKO; J. Maisey NTWC; Ian McKenzie NATF Alt; Duane March Dolphin Marine Magic (prev. Pet Porpoise Pool); L. Taylor WIRES Alt until 4pm; S. Lorigan ORRCA; P. Machin NARG Alt. from 1 pm; C. Spencer TVWC from 1.42pm and until 3pm; I. Roberts NRWC from 1.42 pm; L Vass FOK from 1.50pm; Bill Thompson WIRES from 1.42pm until 4pm.

Many attendees delayed due to weather conditions.

APOLOGIES: P. McLeod KIC; James Fitzgerald Wildcare Q; Denise Singleton RRANA; J Brazel Wildlife ARC;

GUESTS: Stephanie Glasby student, Dr Anne Fawcett and Dr Catherine Herbert, Sydney University

GUEST SPEAKERS: 9.45 - 10.45: Messrs Stephanie Glasby, Dr Catherine Herbert and Dr Anne Fawcett from Sydney University speaking on Best Practice Guidelines – Marsupials
Refer to report in Attachment 1

MORNING TEA

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 28 FEBRUARY 2013

Moved Julia McConnell and Seconded Peter Graham that the Minutes be accepted – Confirmed

2. BUSINESS ARISING

2.1. Grants to Wildlife Rehabilitators – Audrey Koosmen encouraged all groups that have not sent details of their grants to do so quickly. Details are up on Website. Closing date for acceptance of entries is 1 July 2013.

2.2. Public Fund Update – Julia McConnell advised that the NWC application has been received and is progressing normally but that the process of approval can take up to 12 months. Further that because this is an election year it could take longer as it needs to be signed off by both the Minister for the Environment and also the Minister of Treasury. At this stage we may be waiting another 6 months or more.

2.3. Smart Phone App Update – Shirley Lack advised that lots of development had taken place with the App. The idea is that a member of public who comes across a wildlife incident and will be able to put in wording such as “wildlife needs help” and the system will come back with a group within the area of the incident with a direct link to the groups contact details. Shirley Lack will be meeting with development contractors to view early work – looking at completion by the end of August. IFAW has spent a lot of time working on this and has asked that local groups put up a Website banner advising the App is available to the public. A suggestion was made that the developers or an IT specialist provides easy instructions for groups to use when putting the banner on their website. Shirley Lack will investigate this option.

2.4. NATF Wildlife Group Audit – Audrey Koosmen on behalf of NATF thanked the Council and members for their support. She also thanked FAWNA and Hunter Koala for their submissions to NPWS. NATF was not told of submission deadline and was given an extension of time to lodge an Expression of Interest to be licensed for the area under the EOI process. It appears there is nowhere in OEH docs that requires rehab groups to provide a 24 hour emergency phone system and it is believed this will be a requirement. The area in question is due to be under the new licensee from 1 July 2013. Hunter Koala, Wildlife Aid and FAWNA have

all rejected the EOI opportunity and it is not known what EOIs might have been lodged. KIC was also invited. Any change is going to cause difficulties for other groups that have signage in the area in question.

Phil Machin asked about the letter from NWC to OEH and what response might have been received to questions of telephone help line and deviation from Rehabilitation Policy. Phil was provided with a copy of the letter to read and was advised that no response has been received. Ron Haering was invited to meeting today but declined.

Karuah, Raymond Terrace and Clarence Town were areas in question that could have been handed to the unlicensed group WINC (Wildlife in Need of Care).

It has been an extremely stressful time for NATF, its members, and Audrey Koosmen in particular. NATF stands to lose 48 members including very dedicated, experienced and specialised members. It has always been an area with no difficulty in finding rescuers and carers. NATF will keep NWC informed of progress. None of the NATF area rangers knew that this process was happening, i.e. NATF losing some of its area.

The Audit scheduled for Wildlife Aid has not taken place.

2.5. Grant Opportunities – Rochelle Ferris – No information available in Rochelle’s absence. To be brought forward to next General Meeting.

2.6. FF Emergency Contingency Plan – Ilona Roberts and Audrey Koosmen – NWC will follow up plans which seem to be underway for a contingency plan for heat stress events affecting flying-foxes. Audrey Koosmen to action.

2.7. Strategic Plan – Shona Lorigan to amend the Strategic Plan following discussions and decisions and send to the Secretary for distribution.

2.8. NSW Fox Rescue Organisation – Peter Graham advised that this is an organisation that is operating within the law as foxes are not declared as pest animals.

Phil Machin believes NWC should write to the Minister suggesting this legislation (status of vulpes vulpes) needs to be changed.

Proposed and agreed a letter be sent to the Minister as suggested. Peter Graham to draft a letter to the Minister.

3. REPORTS

3.1. Chair –

Website – extra items have been added including the promotion of the Womdata project which involves taking blood samples from wombats for genetic checking and disease monitoring. Audrey encouraged members to contribute to the project and also to provide stories to the Secretary for inclusion on the website. Thanks to Julia McConnell for her excellent first Newsletter. The newsletter has been shared with the Victorian and Queensland Wildlife Councils. The former is now up and running and contact has been made with an invitation to attend a NWC Meeting.

Thanks to Shirley Lack for her hard work on arranging the member group insurance – done with a degree of some difficulty.

Meeting is scheduled to occur with the RMS to negotiate ongoing funding.

Shona Lorigan was thanked for all the time she has spent on the Strategic Plan.

Thanks given to committee and all those who have helped with NWC activities.

Introduction of those travel-delayed members – Lorraine Vass, Friends of the Koala, Ilona Roberts, Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, and Crystal Spencer, Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers.

3.2. Secretary –

The Correspondence In and Correspondence Out was distributed electronically to members prior to the meeting.

Better Planning Network emails discussed. Agreed members do not want to receive all the emails from BPN.

New brochures printed and Meredith Ryan has prepared new address stickers to put over wrong address. Members were asked to distribute within their groups.

NWC carer grant applications opened on 1st May and close on the 1st July. Details are available on www.nwc.org.au, with only one month remaining, representatives were reminded to ensure their members are aware the program is open with only 4 weeks to go.

Audrey Koosmen was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by Jane Mills from Wildlife Rescue South Coast for her activities during the recent Bomaderry Creek Flying-fox incident.

Secretary's report moved for acceptance by Shirley Lack and seconded by Shona Lorigan and Carried.

3.3. Treasurer – Report to 28 May 2013.

The Treasurer's report was distributed electronically to members prior to the meeting.

The insurance payment is still due to be paid and income of \$25,000 is due from OEH.

Moved Shona Lorigan and Seconded by Jane Mills that the Treasurer's Report be accepted – Carried

3.4. Membership

Julia McConnell advised that the Membership List is up to date but someone had reported they haven't received it, so it will be re-distributed immediately.

3.5. Insurance

The insurance payment is still due to be paid and income of \$25,000 due from OEH.

WIRES have withdrawn from the NWC Insurance. Premium has increased to \$23,600. Communications with AON have been difficult. NWC is in the process of getting an alternate quote from another insurer. It may be necessary to pay a monthly premium to ensure cover in the interim.

Approval given for the Executive to make a decision regarding the final Insurer provided the identical cover is included.

3.6. Media – Apologies from Ilona Roberts for difficulties affecting her ability to provide media work for the NWC

3.7. NCC Contact – Nothing to report from James FitzGerald. Lorraine Vass advised that NCC's focus is on the Planning White Paper at the moment.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

4.1. Group Reps Non Attendance at Meetings – Audrey Koosmen advised that we have tried to contact member groups that do not attend meetings. It is felt we should write to Secretaries of groups that do not attend

and encourage attendance. It was questioned whether we should require groups to attend a minimum number of meetings annually, or lose their membership status and therefore the insurance cover. Not all members are insured under NWC.

Audrey Koosmen to send an encouraging invitation to groups who do not attend asking them to participate.

4.2. Use of Phones, Laptops and Devices at Meetings – Audrey Koosmen said that she hopes that when people are using their laptops during meetings they are using them for NWC business rather than their private concerns and asked members to restrict device use for anything other than NWC business.

4.3. Paid Secretariat/CEO – Phil Machin stated that the Council must progress to a paid CEO to progress successfully in the future. Leaving all the workload to volunteers has not been ideal and we have not made much progress with the common database, disaster planning, codes of practice, inability to identify funding and assistance to wildlife group members among others. We have pondered on having a paid admin person, help from OEH and with the exception of a Webmaster this hasn't been done. Phil Machin does not believe NWC will be an effective body without a respected CEO to provide the day to day leadership and capacity to promote the NWC.

Proposed by Phil Machin "That the NWC agrees to the appointment of a CEO"

Lorraine Vass suggested amending to "That the NWC agrees in principle to the appointment of a CEO"

Moved by Lorraine Vass and Seconded by Peter Graham – Motion carried.

"That the Management Committee is to develop a plan of action to consider the factors and changes needed to employ a CEO. The Management Committee is authorised to employ a consultant to do this work if required". Moved by Phil Machin and seconded by Lorraine Vass – Motion Carried.

4.4 Wombat COP – Shirley Lack advised that over the last couple of years NWC has talked about doing Codes of Practice in conjunction with OEH. Due to OEH funding constraints further Codes have been put on the back burner. At a recent local training course held jointly between Wildcare Q and NARG it became obvious because of identified poor practices that a Code of Practice for Wombats was required in the very short term. It is hoped the NWC will set in place Codes of Practice for Wombats and other species eg. Macropods, Reptiles, etc. Bill Thompson noted that WIRES was not invited to the Wombat workshop. Bill was advised that this was a training course, not a workshop and that members from three WIRES Branches as well as other local groups attended.

There is a Motion halting development of any further Codes until NWC groups are satisfied with the Audit process.

Moved by Lorraine Vass 'That Motion 3.8 of the meeting held on 28 February 2013 "That no further action be taken to develop Species Rehabilitation codes until the Audit process is settled to the satisfaction of NWC member groups" be rescinded' Seconded Duan March – Carried.

4.5 National Wildlife Forum – Ilona Roberts advised that the Wildlife Friendly Fencing issue was discussed and is progressing.

4.6 Travel Expenses – Phil Machin suggested that travel expenses for Alternate delegates be allowed as it seems unfair if both reps from a group wish to attend. Phil moved that 'both primary and alternate delegates can attend meetings and claim travel expenses if they wish', seconded Lorraine Vass - Carried

4.7 Calendar – Jackie Maisey reported that a member of NTWC suggested that the NWC produce a Calendar as a fundraiser for various groups who could order the number they wanted. Round table discussion felt it would duplicate what a number of other groups are doing and therefore the idea is not supported at this time.

4.8 Photos on Website – Audrey Koosmen raised the issue of photos of people being published on the Website. WIRES use a licensing agreement. NWC has no policy on use of people's photographs on the Website. Bill Thompson says that if a photograph is taken without someone's knowledge, permission should be sought to

publish and it would be courtesy to ask at the time of taking the photo. There was a time delay in removing a photo off the website when requested and then the photo was returned and shown as a pixilated image. NWC should respect the wishes of all members about the taking or publishing of photos.

Shona Lorigan proposed "That if we are going to take photographs we identify it at the time and ask permission of attendees for the taking and/or publishing of photographs." Seconded Lorraine Vass – carried

4.9 Kangaroo Issue – Audrey Koosmen asked members if they were happy to send the letter to the Minister and who should sign it if agreed to send. This was discussed.

Motion: "Do we send the letter out" – proposed Jackie Maisey and seconded Lorraine Vass – Carried. It was agreed that the Chair is to sign the letter including Phil Machin as the contact.

Proposed "That the Management Committee approaches various NWC partners such as IFAW, NCC, AWS to explore a campaign to support the issue of non-commercial culling and its impacts on rehabilitated macropods post release" seconded Meredith Ryan – Carried.

5 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – Moved Geoff Bartlett that "NWC requests a dog-free zone within the Tilligerry Habitat". This is an area of great importance as koala habitat. Shirley Lack reported on the Steve Phillips presentation on dog attacks on koalas at the National Koala Conference. Lorraine Vass suggested that all reps should see a copy of the letter drafted to the Tilligerry Habitat Association and the Port Stephens Council before any decision is taken. Geoff Bartlett to provide initial drafts of both letters to the Secretary.

Lorraine Vass advised that the 2013-2014 GVESHO Grant program is now open and that applications close on 20 June 2013.

Jackie Maisey advised that the NTWC would like to thank the NWC for the effort they are putting in on behalf of wildlife and in particular to Phil Machin for his work on the Kangaroo cull issue.

Peter Graham asked if the NWC should consider making a donation to the marsupial care study? Decision was taken not to fund the programme at this stage.

6 **NEXT MEETING:** Sat 24 and Sun 25 August at The Centre, Randwick

MEETING CLOSED: 4.25 pm