



New South Wales
Wildlife Council Inc.

Wildlife Watch

Issue # 1 — January 2008

Produced for people with an interest in wildlife rehabilitation and conservation in NSW

Council Addresses Communication Challenge

Welcome to this first issue of *Wildlife Watch*, the newsletter of the NSW Wildlife Council.

The primary purpose of this publication is to communicate the Council's role and activities to all stakeholders. Whether you are one of the State's 4,500 voluntary wildlife rehabilitators, a public servant working in wildlife management, a member of a veterinary practice, an academic, private consultant, student, a business person operating a wildlife-related enterprise, an animal welfare or environmental activist, an elected representative of the people (or staffer) with an interest in the welfare of the State's native fauna, we want you to become familiar with the NSW Wildlife Council and its work.

The Council was established in 2005 to act as the peak representative body for wildlife rehabilitators in New South Wales. All but a handful of such rehabbers are members of licensed groups and these constitute the Council's membership, each represented by their own appointee. So far twenty of the twenty seven eligible groups have joined the Council. Individual licencees are treated as a group and

appoint their own representative, thus making twenty-one members in all.

Business is carried out at quarterly meetings held in Sydney and by electronic discussion. The responsibilities of the member representative include regular meeting attendance; active participation in the Council's work, including accepting assignments and completing them thoroughly and on time; staying informed about Council matters, preparing themselves well for meetings, reviewing and commenting on minutes and reports; getting to know other Council members and building a collegial working rela-



NWC Strategic Planning Workshop participants: left to right: Denise Singleton (RRANA), Audrey Koosmen (NATF), Gwen Sez nec (NRWC), John Donnelly (NTWC), Joan Hills (WCN-Central West), Stan Wood (WIREs), Lorraine Vass (FOK), Steve Amesbury (NANA), Ilona Roberts (TVWC), Peter Schulties (KPS of NSW), Wayne Singleton (RRANA), Sonja Elwood (Sydney Wildlife). Photographed by Facilitator, Dr Lynn Webber (DECC).

tionship that contributes to consensus and co-operation; actively participating in the Council's evaluation and planning exercises and reporting on Council matters as required by the constituents who made the appointment. Keeping in mind that all reps on the Council are active in their own organizations and more often than not an office-bearer in their group, taking on Council work as well is real commitment.

The publication of *Wildlife Watch*, in January, April, July and November will

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roughly follow the Council's meeting cycle. As well as reporting matters of interest from those meetings, *Wildlife Watch* will strive to put faces to people and to introduce issues of strategic significance. It will also keep an eye on interstate developments in wildlife rehabilitation. Distribution will be predominantly electronic although some hard copies will be produced and posted.

Together with the Council's website www.nwc.org.au and each member group's representative's reporting through their own organizational communication mechanisms, *Wildlife Watch* will ensure, over time, a healthy flow of information across the sector and to the general public as well.

As with most aspects of the Council's activities so early on in its development, *Wildlife Watch* is a work in progress. If you have any comment to improve design, content, distribution and so on, please email media@nwc.org.au. Be mindful that the final decision rests with the Executive.

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NWC Operational Framework

Mission: *Achieving optimal outcomes for Australian wildlife*

Objectives: *The Council will:*

- Act as the peak representative body for licensed wildlife rehabilitators in New South Wales.
- Foster the sharing of available resources among rehabilitators and will collect, assemble and disseminate accurate and up to date information on all aspects of wildlife care, rescue, rehabilitation and release.
- Develop State/National standards and codes of practice for both captive wildlife management and the training of rehabilitators and through education and training maximize the welfare outcomes for native animals.
- Act as an independent advisory Council to all levels of Government, business and the community on wildlife rehabilitation and habitat conservation.
- Work with equivalent councils from other states and territories towards the creation of a national wildlife rehabilitation council.
- Work for the interests and needs of wildlife rehabilitators
- Undertake such other representations, programs and activities as may, at the discretion of the Council, be considered necessary and proper.

Functions: *The Council may pursue its objectives by engagement in the following:*

- Establish and maintain (within the legislative and regulatory framework) codes of practice and State/National standards for wildlife care.
- Promote the registration of education and training standards for licensed wildlife rehabilitators.
- Provide considered advice on any wildlife care/rehabilitation matters where applicable.
- Promote networking and dialogue between all those involved in wildlife health and welfare.
- Represent and provide a collective voice for its constituents.
- Liaise with relevant government ministers and departments regarding the work and outcomes of the Council.
- Establish working groups or seek wider consultation to assist it in carrying out its functions as deemed necessary
- Advance and promote community awareness, interest and support for native wildlife welfare and conservation.
- Seek funding for pursuing the Council's objectives.
- Liaise with other State Councils in the creation of a National Council.

Appointment of Members

Representatives:

- Licensed rehabilitation groups will

constitute the voting membership of the New South Wales Wildlife Council (NWC). Each licensed rehabilitator group will determine the method of appointment of the member(s) who will represent it on the Council.

- The number of representatives each licence holder is entitled to on the NWC will be one per licence and one group vote for independent licence holders. Each licenced group may also nominate an alternate representative. The representative and alternate must be endorsed by the appointing group's Board or Management Committee annually.
- Persons will be elected by fellow NWC representatives for the positions of chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, media officer, public officer, minute secretary, webmaster, fundraising officer and education officer. There shall be annual elections for these positions.
- The committee (executive) shall comprise the chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer and media officer. Alternates are not eligible to be committee members, but may hold other elected positions.
- The Council may, at its discretion, instigate a mechanism to allow variation to the representation entitlements of affiliated licensed carer groups and the process of representative selection.

Sundry Snippets

Strategic Planning

The proceedings of the Council's strategic planning workshop were received prior to Christmas. Work is currently underway in developing the action plan to implement the key directions identified during the workshop. More about this in the April issue of *Wildlife Watch*.

Group boundaries

At long last DECC's Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit is coming to grips with the ambiguities of group/branch boundaries arising from past licensing decisions. The Unit has mapped the boundaries and handed over the work to the Executive for distribution. Unit Manager, Ron Haering will address the Council's next meeting to be held on 26

February 2008 on the issue of group boundaries.

Singleton's bats

In early December the Council sent letters to DECC and to the Federal Department of Environment and Water Resources expressing the Council's concerns about Singleton City Council's application to harm the Grey-Headed Flying Foxes in the town's Burdekin Park. The Council is keen to work with DECC to develop a state-wide public education programme about flying foxes and their management.

Meet...Ron Haering

Ron was appointed Manager of the Wildlife Licensing and Management

Unit towards mid 2007. He came from DECC's Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Reform and Compliance Branch, where his responsibilities included coordinating threatened species recovery plans.



Ron is the Council's primary point of contact with the *Ron Haering* Department. After his first six months or so in the job he is probably wondering whether his considerable and highly respected experience in wildlife management will ever get a look-in.

Chair's Report Underlines Council's Progress

In her second annual report presented to the Council's Annual General Meeting on 27 October 2007, Chair, Audrey Koosmen congratulated member representatives on their personal commitment to the Council's progress and commended the stronger relationships between member groups which have grown out of the communication and networking brought about by Council activities.

She told delegates,

"Because we have decided to work as one with a common goal, the wildlife rehabilitation community of New South Wales is more robust than at any previous time". Audrey said that although the Council is still 'crawling' it is moving forward. "Everyone should understand we will never please all. Rather we should be proud of the progress we have made in breaking down mistrust and building partnerships with stakeholders, including government."

"The time and energy that must be invested to achieve sustainable partnerships should not be underestimated. This year saw a change in minister, restructuring of the agency and a change in key staff with whom the Council interacts. The goodwill that had been established during the Council's first 12

months has had to be re-affirmed during the second. Encouraging progress has been made but the 'opportunity lost' factor must be borne in mind. Council representatives, including its office-bearers are generally speaking, time-poor as most hold management as well as operational responsibilities in the member organizations they represent."

"Because we have decided to work as one with a common goal, the wildlife rehabilitation community of NSW is more robust than at any previous time" — Audrey Koosmen

"Several projects under the Council's consideration have been addressed during the year. In relation to the standardization of statistical data and its shared accessibility, Mr. Patrick Connor, principal of Curious Developments Ltd. has spoken to the Council on two occasions. Vice Chair Stan Wood has worked on amendments to the Constitution which, when completed will enable the Council to be entered on the Register of Environmental Organizations. Steve Amesbury has been drafting guidelines for disputes resolution within member groups as well as preparing a business case for developing minimum standards."

"Issues that the Council has actively pursued have included continuation of government-funded insurance coverage for member groups, clarification of licensing policy and its application, finan-

cial assistance for ABL pre-inoculation for rehabilitators, and the destruction of grey-headed flying fox habitat at Dulguigan, Murwillumbah."

"An article on the Council's formation and early achievements was published in the Winter issue (3/2007) of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia's journal, *Australian Wildlife*. NWC has become an associate member of the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales (NCC) and is assessing how best to participate in that organization to further the Council's objectives", Audrey reported.

Other meeting guests were Mick O'Flynn, Manager, Conservation Operations Section and Ron Haering, Manager, Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit, of the Department of the Environment and Climate Change. They addressed the June meeting on a wide range of issues which had been flagged for discussion by Council members. Drs David Phalen and Anne Fowler, Director and Chief Veterinarian respectively of the Wildlife Health Unit, University of Sydney, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Camden, made a presentation to the February meeting on the *Wildlife Health and Conservation Centre and Teaching Facility and the NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Community*.

2007-8 Members and Representatives

For Australian Wildlife Needing Aid (FAWNA)

To be advised

Friends of the Koala, Inc. (FOK)

Lorraine Vass; alternate, Barbara Dobner

Hunter Koala Preservation Society, Inc.

To be advised

Individual General Licences

Julia McConnell

Koala Preservation Society of New South Wales, Inc. (KPS of NSW)

Cheyne Flannigan; alternate, Peter Schulties

Koalas in Care, Inc.

Paul McLeod; alternate, Barbara Witham

Looking After Our Kosciusko Orphans, Inc. (LAOKO)

Alex Javorsek; alternate, Carola Vamvakaris

Native Animal Network Association, Inc. (NANA)

Steve Amesbury; alternate, John Meany

Native Animal Rescue Group

Shirley Lack; alternate Don Buckley

Native Animal Trust Fund, Inc.

(NATF)

Audrey Koosmen; alternate, Jill Dean

New South Wales Wildlife Information and Rescue Service, Inc.

(WIRES)

Stan Wood; alternate, Caroline Enfield

Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Inc.

(NRWC) *Gwen Seznec; alternate, Giles White*

Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers, Inc. (NTWC)

Harold Heffernan; alternate, John Donnelly

Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans (ORRCA)

Ronny Ling; alternate, Shona Lorigan

Rescue and Rehabilitation of Australian Native Animals (RRANA)

Wayne Singleton; alternate, Denise Singleton

Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services, Inc. (Sydney Wildlife)

Sonja Elwood; alternate, Helen Kennedy

Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers, Inc.

(TVWC) *Ilona Roberts; alternate, Jan Bishop*

Wildcare Queanbeyan, Inc.

(Wildcare) *Coralie Tarlinton; alternate, Bill Waterhouse*

Wildlife Aid

Anthony Muffet; alternate, Damien Brell

Wildlife Animal Rescue & Care Society, Inc. (Wildlife ARC)

Gwen Parry-Jones; alternate, Don Gowling

Wildlife Carers Network - Central

West, Inc. (WCN-Central West)

Joan Hills; alternate, Ronda Bradford

Values and Principles for NSW Wildlife Rehabbers

The Council adopted a simple statement of values in May 2006:

In encouraging our members to achieve the stated objectives of the association, the NSW Wildlife Council values the following:

1. Humane and ethical treatment of all animals.
2. Sharing and co-operation between all individuals and groups in the wildlife rehabilitation community.
3. Continuous learning and improvement in relation to all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation.
4. The principles of conservation, particularly as they pertain to Australian native animals and their habitat.

During 2007, in consultation with member groups, the Council worked on documenting further its aims and principles by developing a Code of Ethics. The Code used by the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association (US) and International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council was adapted with the permission of both those bodies.

In October the Code was formally ratified as policy which is binding on member groups and forms a condition of membership to the NSW Wildlife Council.

Code of Ethics

A wildlife rehabilitator *should* —

- strive to achieve high standards of animal care through knowledge and an understanding of the field. Continuing efforts must be made to keep informed of current rehabilitation information, methods, and regulations.
- be responsible, conscientious, and dedicated, and should continuously work toward improving the quality of care given to native fauna undergoing rehabilitation.
- establish and maintain safe working habits and conditions.
- acknowledge limitations and enlist the assistance of a veterinarian or other trained professional when appropriate.
- respect other rehabilitators and persons in related fields, sharing skills and knowledge in the spirit of cooperation for the welfare of animals.
- place optimum animal care above personal gain.
- strive to provide professional and humane care in all phases of wildlife rehabilitation, respecting the wildness and maintaining the dignity of each animal in life and in death. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate. Non-releasable animals which are inappropriate for education, foster-parenting, companionship or captive breeding have a right to euthanasia.
- encourage community support and involvement through volunteer training and public education. The common goal should be to promote a responsible concern for living beings and the welfare of the environment.
- work on the basis of sound ecological principles, incorporating appropriate conservation ethics and an attitude of stewardship. In particular, there must be a focus on the preservation of habitat for native fauna.
- conduct all business and activities in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, compassion, and commitment, realizing that an individual's conduct reflects on the entire field of wildlife rehabilitation.

A wildlife rehabilitator *must* —

- abide by local, state, and federal laws concerning wildlife, wildlife rehabilitation and associated activities.

Interstate Matters...

The annual national wildlife rehabilitation conferences which have been held over the past five years have strengthened cohesion in the wildlife rehabilitation industry and progressed the development of representative state/territory bodies.



Wildlife rehabbers across the country are gaining a better understanding of the diversity of issues and practices which exist in the various jurisdictions. They are realizing too that there is a national

perspective to wildlife rehabilitation and conservation.

The Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, Inc. (QWRC) was the first state body to get off the ground in August 2004. The Council consists of up to 16 members, 11 of whom are wildlife rehabilitation permit holders drawn from 11 districts across the state. The others are representatives from the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria [Qld], the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and the RSPCA.

In November 2005 QWRC and QPWS signed a Memorandum of Understanding. In 2006 the Environmental Protec-

tion Agency [Qld] published a *Code of Practice – care and rehabilitation of orphaned, sick or injured protected animals by wildlife care volunteers* in consultation with DPI&F and QWRC.

Read more about QWRC's work at www.qwrc.org.au The Code can be downloaded at http://bats.org.au/downloads/code_of_practice.pdf

The 2008 National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference will be hosted by RSPCA Wildlife ACT in Canberra, from 21-25 July 2008. Being so much closer to home than Perth (2007) and Darwin (2006), a bumper NSW registration can be expected.

An update on the new Victorian State Wildlife Council will be included in the April issue of *Wildlife Watch*.