



New South Wales
Wildlife Council Inc.

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Wildlife Watch

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

Council Plans its Future

This second issue of *Wildlife Watch* focuses on the Council's recent strategic planning exercise.

The need for a strategic and planned approach to business had been identified by Council members in early 2007. The matter was discussed with officers of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) in mid-year and taken on board. In due course the facilitating services of Dr Lynn Webber, Manager, Conservation Partnerships, DECC were offered and eagerly accepted.

The strategic planning process commenced in September 2007 and involved written input from a wide range of stakeholders as well as Council members. That input was analysed by Lynn and categorized into key issue themes.

The themes provided the basis for a workshop held on 26 October 2007. Participation was limited to Council member representatives. Wildlife vet and educator, Dr Anne Fowler provided the key-note address, giving an overview of strategic issues and trends she has identified in wildlife rehabilitation (see her summary, p.3). The rest of the day was devoted to small group discussions, reporting back, and assigning priorities.

Lynn undertook to gather the material generated into documented

'proceedings'. Over the holiday season, reps Lorraine Vass and Steve Amesbury worked on drafting a plan from the 'proceedings'. A draft document was circulated to the Executive and to Lynn for comment after which it was circulated to all Council representatives via the electronic discussion forum. Following some amendment a more refined version was considered at the Council's meeting on 26 February 2008.

The workshop had provided a thorough understanding of the large amount of work ahead, thus re-affirming the need for a strategic approach to ensure that the Council uses its limited resources to achieve the most effective outcomes for now, and in the longer term. To that end it was agreed that the NSW Wildlife Council (NWC) will:

—Concentrate on those things that are 'core business' and which help it to establish and increase its capacity.

—Focus on issues that are not being addressed by other organisations.

Initially a five-year plan had been considered but the volume of priority issues which were identified prompted preference for a triennium time-frame.

To ensure that those areas where the biggest impact can be made are addressed, the NWC will concentrate on three objectives over 2008 - 2010:

1. Establish and consolidate the NWC's position as a viable and respected participant in the conservation and environmental movement.

Rationale: To effectively pursue its key objective, the Council must be viable and have credibility with its peers and stakeholders.

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2. Achieve better outcomes for wildlife

Rationale: This is the Council's key objective, and its reason for existing.

3. Encourage the growth and viability of the voluntary wildlife rehabilitation 'sector'

Rationale: Nationally there is a decline in the number of people volunteering. More volunteers are required for progressing the Council's key objective.

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Planning Workshop Facilitator, Lynn Webber



Reps assigning priorities

Future Directions 2008 - 2010: the NSW Wildlife Council's Strategic Plan

Objective 1: Establish and consolidate the NWC's position as a viable and respected participant in the conservation and environmental movement		
Strategies	S1	Enhance the capacity of the NWC
	S2	Secure support and ongoing funding for the NWC's operation and key initiatives
	S3	Establish and enhance relationships with other conservation / environmental organisations
	S4	Effectively communicate the NWC's objectives, values, codes, policies, standards and achievements
Objective 2: Achieve better outcomes for wildlife		
Strategies	S5	Establish state-wide minimum standards for all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation
	S6	Provide members with tools and information to assist them to work more effectively and to maintain organizational cohesion
	S7	Lobby, and provide support to others who lobby on issues that pertain to the welfare of wildlife
	S8	Establish standards for the collection, retention and use of wildlife rehabilitation statistics
	S9	Work to improve laws, regulations and policies which apply to wildlife protection and rehabilitation
Objective 3: Encourage the growth and viability of the voluntary wildlife rehabilitation sector		
Strategies	S10	Encourage recognition of achievements in the field of wildlife rehabilitation
	S11	Improve awareness and respect in the community of wildlife rehabilitation
	S12	Develop a standardized 'recruitment campaign' for NWC member organisations
	S13	Pursue the formation of a national representative wildlife rehabilitation body

The Plan (shown above) fleshes out what is needed to achieve tangible results in each of the priority goals/objectives by proposing a number of strategies. A table (not reproduced here) lists the components of work to be completed within each strategy over the three year period of the Plan. The *Task Workplan 2008* sets out the particular tasks the Council aims to achieve through the 2008 calendar year. Progress will be reviewed at the Council's meetings in May, August and November.

February Meeting Report

The first ordinary meeting for 2008 (the Council's 9th), was held on 26 February at the offices of the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) in Hurstville.

Membership has increased with the admittance of Australian Seabird Rescue Inc. (Representative, Marny Bonner; Alternate, Julie Clarke) and recently formed Cudgegong Wildlife Carers (Representative, Margaret Squire; Alternate, Rachel Knowles).

The major items of business finalized at the February meeting, apart from the strategic plan, were amendments to the Constitution, and the draft *Conflict Management Guidelines* for NWC members.

The thrust of the Constitutional changes agreed to will enable the Council to apply to be entered into the Register of Environmental Organizations, the Federal tax-deductibility scheme administered by the Department of Environment

and Water Resources.

The *Conflict Management Guidelines* endorsed have been developed by the Council for the benefit of member groups and individuals. There is no compulsion for member associations to formally adopt the guidelines, although all members are encouraged to have in place conflict management/disputes resolution procedures which are at least as thorough as the guidelines. The *Guidelines* can be downloaded from the website: www.nwc.org.au

Manager of the Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit, Ron Haering, addressed the Council on two issues, the Department's position in regard to funding and the boundaries and membership mapping project. Thanks to WIRES all groups have now received a copy of the boundaries mapping on compact disc. Any questions regarding map accuracy should be directed in writing to Allan

McLean. Groups which have yet to submit their current membership lists should email them to:

Allan.McLean@environment.nsw.gov.au

In regard to funding, DECC has covered the costs of the 2007-8 insurance premiums. Payment in future years will be subject to satisfactory progress being made on the Council's priority objectives set out in *Future Directions*. Some funding will be made available to expedite strategy 5: Establish state-wide minimum standards for all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation and perhaps other agreed projects. The Council will need to find operational funding from other sources.

Other major topics under discussion included the crisis in rescue arrangements brought about by Telstra's withdrawal of the 0500 service and the proposed sale of native reptiles through pet shops.

The Changing Face of Wildlife Rehabilitation

I was asked by the NSW Wildlife Council for my thoughts on what I could see as the issues facing carers and where rehabilitation was heading in the next 10 - 20 years. Hopefully, these brief notes will act to stimulate discussion, highlight some of the issues, and maybe provoke action to address or influence the direction of wildlife rehabilitation in Australia this century.

A current issue is the groundswell interest in the development of minimum standards. The public expects that wildlife will be treated humanely, receive prompt veterinary care, receive food and fresh water in a clean and safe enclosure. Minimum standards are common sense practice and some states have already begun to write their standards of care with other states following in the near future.

The age group that wildlife carers fall into is changing. When I began teaching 12 years ago, the majority of the carers were in 40+ age group. Younger age groups are becoming represented, particularly in Victoria and Queensland. These younger people want to fit rehabilitation into their lifestyles and appreciate that they may face limitations of what they do and when, depending on whether they are renting, studying, or having children. But this is generation Y, the 'Me' generation. We are seeing declining levels of volunteerism across all charities. How will this impact wildlife carer groups? Will they be selfish and not volunteer? Or will they have a strong sense of environmental consciousness and be keen to work with people and animals to make things better? Only time will tell.

Public awareness of wildlife issues is declining. It would appear that the challenges facing our wildlife have been swallowed up by 'climate change'. For many people, this problem is so big, they feel helpless to effect change in their home, suburb or community. How do we empower the public to take responsibility for climate change, and thus habitat for wildlife, in their daily lives? We have seen a lack of research into public opinion about their attitudes to wildlife. We have seen a lack of government-funded programs to educate the public about wildlife in recent years.

Can we change this? For urban Australians, the Brushtail possum, blue-tongue lizard and magpie will be the only wild animals that they see in the wild, other than seeing wild animals in a zoo. The last 50 years has seen the number of reptile species seen in the Sydney area decline from 20 to 10 species. Will those 10 species still be present in 50 years time? Can we educate the public to place a value on the wild animals that share our yards, schools and workplaces in time to keep these species in our urban environment?

There is a need to engage young veterinarians who are interested in wildlife, but do not know how to get involved. There is a lack of feedback from carers to vets which prevents vets from learning from the decisions that they make about cases.

Education of carers will evolve in the next decades. We will see greater emphasis on specialized care courses, and greater emphasis on knowledge of animal biology and sociology – demonstrated so well currently by our flying fox and koala carers. The information on wildlife has exploded in the last 10 years, and this trend will continue. Information will be sourced from books, internet, distance education – and who knows what will be next – neural implants?

Carer organizations will continue to provide education and will demonstrate a greater role as sentinels of disease outbreaks in wildlife. I envisage a more professional approach to wildlife rehabilitation by carers and improved lobbying and liaison with government agencies on issues facing our wildlife in the coming years.

—Anne Fowler, BSc(Vet)(Hons), BVSc, MACVSc (Avian Health)

Anne is Senior Clinical Veterinary Registrar, Wildlife Health & Conservation Centre, University of Sydney, Camden.

She is well-known to the wildlife rehabilitation fraternity - she presents workshops and seminars all over Australia and has developed a number of videos and manuals illustrating procedures for the care of wildlife.



Anne Fowler

Anne is presently conducting research on how to improve treatment of burned animals.

She is an active member of the Australian Veterinary Association, The Australian Chapter of the Wildlife Disease Association, the Unusual and Exotic Pet Special Interest Group of which she is President and the Association of Avian Veterinarians.

Her passions are the health and wellbeing of native wildlife.

Interstate Matters

6th National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference (NWRC), Canberra, 21-25 July 2008

The website for the 2008 conference is up at: www.nwrc.com.au

The venue is the Crowne Plaza Conventional Centre. A scale of three registration fees is on offer: by 30 April \$289; by 1 June \$329; after that \$349. Single day registration is \$106, \$119 and \$126 respectively.

The special offer made at the Perth Conference that the first, 100th, 200th and 300th applications received will have their registration fees reimbursed during the Conference will be honoured.

Programme details at this stage:

Monday 21 July—Welcome cocktail function (evening)

Tuesday 22, Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 July—Plenary sessions

Wednesday 23 July (evening)—Conference Dinner

Friday 25 July—Day trip to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (BBQ provided) to see the endangered Corroboree Frog breeding programme, Visitors' and Education Centres

Saturday 26th July - Necropsy session
Costs of optional functions and events are available on the registration form which can be downloaded from the site.

IFAW plans to hold emergency relief training in conjunction with the Conference. Keep your eye on the website for information.

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Towards a Victorian Council

Formation of a Council in Victoria continues. The initial working group dissolved in mid 2007 to make way for a Steering Committee. Elections to select representatives were held and the first meeting took place in October 2007. A second meeting was held on 18 November 2007 and a third on 17 February 2008. At the Committee's request, IFAW chairs meetings.

Membership of the Steering Committee comprises one representative each of the two state-wide groups, Wildlife Victoria and Help for Wildlife, and regions which are based on the Department of Sustainability and Environment's regions of Barwon South West, Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume, Gippsland, and Metropolitan.

Each region has two representatives and one alternate. The exception is Metropolitan, which, due to its high membership, has four representatives and one alternate. All regional positions are elected from candidates within each region. The Department has observer status on the Committee.

The Steering Committee's charter is to:
—prepare the constitution of the Council
—establish a code of conduct
—formalize the process for and conduct state-wide elections for Council membership.

Progress is heartening. The Committee has really got the bit between its teeth and the constitution, mission statement, objectives, etc. are coming along quickly.

Editor's Corner

Thank you to the forty readers who provided feedback on the first issue of *Wildlife Watch*. Many of you passed it on to colleagues, thus increasing its circulation. Special thanks to Ron Haering for arranging distribution throughout DECC, and to Michael Bourke of the TAFE Primary Industries and Natural Resources Curriculum Centre for distributing it to all TAFE teachers involved in related areas of teaching.

A modest print run of 200 complemented the electronic distribution. Copies, with a covering letter were posted to external stakeholders and politicians. Feedback has been very encouraging and some even complimentary. One article on the Council has been written for a stakeholder's newsletter.

Email media@nwc.org.au for anything to do with *Wildlife Watch*.

Meet the NWC Executive**Chair—Audrey Koosmen.**

Doyenne of wildlife rehabilitation in NSW, Audrey has been a carer and activist for 40-odd years. She was a founding member of the Hunter Region's Native Animal Trust Fund (NATF). Formed in 1974, NATF is one of the first of the State's voluntary wildlife rehabilitation groups. Audrey has been its President for longer than she likes to admit.



Following the second National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference in 2004, Audrey worked tirelessly to get the Council up and running. She is in her third term of office.

Vice Chair—Stan Wood

Stan was elected WIRES Coffs Harbour branch representative to the State Management Committee of WIRES in 2001 and elected Chair of WIRES State Management Committee in 2003.



He claims both his age and his lengthy interest in the environment are demonstrated by the fact that he remembers Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. He was also a fan of Jack

Munday's *Green Bans*.

Stan served on the NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Steering Committee and is in his third term of office.

Sonja Elwood—Secretary

Sonja has been rehabbing in Sydney for more than 20 years; 10 years with WIRES Sydney and the last 11 years with Sydney Wildlife (a founder and one of eight directors). Sonja has a degree in

Environmental Science (Macquarie University) and is currently completing a Master of Wildlife Conservation. She teaches part-time with Pittwater Council's Coastal Environment Centre at Narabeen.

Sonja served on the NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Steering Committee and was elected the Council's inaugural Media Officer, serving during 2006.

Julia McConnell—Treasurer

Julia's involvement in wildlife care began in 1987 when her husband Bill and she joined a group and attended a Reptile Handling course. Bill was granted a General Licence in 1989/90 and in 1993 they assisted with the founding of the Hawkesbury Herpetological Society.



Since mid-2007 Julia has represented Independent General Licencees on the Council.

She graciously took on the position of Treasurer over the 2007-8 holiday season and was formally elected to the position at the Council's February meeting.

Lorraine Vass—Media Officer

Lorraine's wildlife rehab experience dates from 2000 when she and husband Rick joined 'Friends of the Koala' [Northern Rivers]. She has been the group's President since 2002.



Lorraine has a long interest in environmental issues. She holds a number of positions including Committee member of the North Coast Environment Council and trustee of the Broadwater Koala Reserve.

She served on the NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Steering Committee and was elected the Council's inaugural Secretary, stepping aside at the end of 2007.