

SUMMARY REPORT OF NSW WILDLIFE COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS WITH NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE at the GENERAL MEETING NO. 47 TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 43 BRIDGE STREET, HURSTVILLE

The meeting convened with 20 NWC member group Representatives and Alternate delegates representing 16 member groups and there were visitors present as listed below

VISITORS		NPWS/OEH
Peter	Stathis	Manager, Biodiversity & Wildlife
Ron	Haering	Senior Project Officer, Biodiversity & Wildlife Team
Vanessa	Wilson	Project Officer, Systems & Data
Alison	Foster	Project Officer, Biodiversity & Wildlife Team
Robert	Oliver	Implementation Manager, Wildlife Biodiv. Reforms
April	Suen	IFAW Wildlife Campaigner
Rebekka	Thompson-Jones	IFAW

UPDATE ON FUTURE NPWS OUTCOMES – Peter Stathis, Manager, Biodiversity and Wildlife Unit.

Overview on what has changed: 2 Executive Directors; 8 Regions; 37 areas. Anthony Lean is the Chief Executive and ostensible Head of Parks.

An organisational chart and list of area personnel has been provided and distributed to NWC line.

There will be an Executive Director, Park Operations and in the field each of the 8 regions will have, inter alia, their own

Area Manager

Team Leader Rangers

Assets personnel

Branch Program Managers (BPM)

Senior Conservation Planning Officer With the BPMs, SCPOs are accountable for the biodiversity and wildlife strategy This may also involve Team Leader Rangers. Precise accountabilities and communication protocols are being worked out now.

For the first time each Region will have a Biodiversity and Wildlife Action Plan and this will include liaising with wildlife rehabilitation groups.

Q & A on Enforcement: NPWS recognises there has been concern for a long time from the rehabilitation sector about enforcement. Rangers are responsible for a vast array of accountabilities which includes enforcement covering the whole spectrum of Park activities, not just wildlife. It is simply not possible to meet everyone’s expectations of what enforcement activity should be undertaken. Resources are scarce and efforts need to be directed to highest priority needs. NPWS is working on a strategic approach for future enforcement in the wildlife area to address concerns it is dropping the ball on regulation. This entails designing a 5 year plan that will include enforcement/compliance campaigns, possibly in partnership with other Agencies focussing on highest risk issues. We recognise we need to change approach and can do better.

Q&A KPJ – who do we approach on particular incidents?: PS – Enviroline, and the SCPO’s or Team Leader Rangers when in place and we have sorted out communication protocols.

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SL – ORRCA mindful that political activities don't reflect badly back on NPWS. Concern lack of action could lead not only to injury but to fatality. ORRCA always have taken the team player approach. PS – want to work closely, and know what is likely to be said. It is a matter for the NWC and its members how political they wish to be but we do appreciate early advice of any such intentions so we can prepare appropriate advice to our Managers.

The Biodiversity and Wildlife Unit (BWU) sits in Conservation Programs under the Park Programs Division and is led by Richard Kingswood, Director Conservation includes:

Peter Stathis: Manager, Biodiversity and Wildlife Unit

Susan Crocetti, Team Leader Wildlife

Ron Haering, Senior Project Officer

Julie McInnes, Supervisor Wildlife Licensing
and Wildlife Project officers

UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE FAUNA REHABILITATION SECTOR REVIEW REPORT (Discussion Paper) – Peter Stathis and Ron Haering, Senior Project Officer, Biodiversity & Wildlife Team

Discussion Paper: The full review document will now be accompanied by a smaller snapshot document. Both are currently en route to CEO Anthony Lean. NPWS is the Gold Sponsor for the Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference 2018 and the CEO be giving the opening address.

TRUTH A SAMPLE REPORT FROM THE SURVEY DATA ON YOUR MEMBERS. THE REPORT IS GROUP SPECIFIC BUT UNIDENTIFIED TO GROUP, AND WILL FORM PART OF WHAT WE WANT TO GIVE BACK TO EACH GROUP IN RETURN FOR THEIR INPUT LAST YEAR - Vanessa Wilson, Project Officer, Systems & Data

Data packages: Intro by PS 18% of all rehabilitators responded to survey, exceeding expectations. We made a commitment to give back data relevant to each group. Vanessa has done a terrific job and will be giving an example on how we will be giving back data to all members. Results can be used to provide feedback from your members to change practices if appropriate.

VW presented a snapshot of survey responses from one group that enables a comparison of data compiled and aggregated for all groups. This will enable groups to evaluate how they compare with other groups across the whole gamut of survey questions on group's operations, demographics, members' attitudes, etc. Group results might lead to recognition of a need to change of practices.

NPWS will deliver the data to groups and will offer the opportunity to visit each group/executive – either just to the executive team or to the group as a whole. Survey results will be sent to groups as quickly as feasible.

RH - Vet survey responses – 151 responses – some vets feel isolated from their peers. Contact also made with vet nurses who responded to the survey. LV how will survey responses be shared? RH it will be included in the discussion paper.

Difficulty of getting encounter location of animals delivered to vets. Some groups provide a sheet to be completed with encounter and contact details. Perhaps vet nurses could be advised the importance of this data.

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UPDATE ON STATUS OF THE KOALA STRATEGY; PS INTRODUCE ALISON FOSTER

Koala Strategy genetic protocol progress report – We want to know how it is being implemented by each group, any problems or needs. Groups who attended the workshop have been asked to prepare meeting input prior to attending to inform discussions – 20min (AF, PS, RH)

Koala Strategy: Alison Foster has returned and has taken over the development of this body of work. OEH is being asked to commit to this strategy – told there is more money coming and there is some money available now.

COP, genetic protocol, biobanking koala samples at Australian Museum (AM). AM has received 160 samples and is happy to get more samples, and would like some from Southern NSW. How can NPWS further support? Delivery, postage, please provide feedback on what might be useful. Should we further engage with vets? Are there gaps? Could there be better data collection? Could we hook into vets' communications networks? Other big area of need is cleaning up existing data – the 2010-2017 fauna records to extract koala data. There are over 620,000 records in all. Bugs in the records include location details, condition codes, encounter types, age, missing and redundant codes with aim to tighten up more. If all that data goes into Bionet it is a fantastic resource. We need to liaise on improvements to work for everybody. Need workshop to review the current datasheet for wildlife rehabilitators.

Comment R Woodman - Impressed by AM's data and public availability. It appears some vets have question of ethics in providing samples to AM. Ron Haering has had one meeting with Australian Veterinary Association and maybe that is the source to get a Policy enabling communication to veterinary membership on genetic sampling data.

M Black asked for feedback on transport of blood samples. PWK would like assistance with delivery of samples. Check test sample protocol to see if there is transport protocol. NPWS to advise.

KOALA CODE OF PRACTICE STATUS UPDATE – Extract from Minutes of Meeting

Report – S. Lorigan COP Koala review. Draft 1 sent out – only half have responded. However due to the clarity of those responses, many of the 20 review comments in the first draft have been resolved. A 2nd draft has been distributed seeking clarification on some further comments. When the Draft Code goes for internal review the earlier responses will still be on the document so that reviewers can understand the group's decision process. Discussion notes on record keeping and training have been passed to OEH who has confirmed the end of year data document will present clearer options and wording. OEH believes that "koalas" will be the first area where a standardised training will be formulated. The manner of training is up to each individual group but specific points and topics will need to be covered within the training. Steve Phillips will be reviewing that draft together with senior OEH people and that will be due back also by 2/3. All 2nd draft replies are due no later than 2/3.

Comment: LV lot of difference in practices between general groups and koala-specific groups. Vets for specific groups are more specialised.

INITIATE SCOPING A PILOT OF TRAINING STANDARDS FOR SPECIALIST SPECIES BASED ON KOALAS
– there was no discussion recorded on this topic.

NEW APVMA PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR TREATING WOMBATS WITH MANGE – 15 MIN (PS, RH)

Background: In February 2017, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) issued a permit to allow the supply and minor use of a veterinary chemical product – Cydectin Pour On for use in

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wombats. The permit holder is Manage Management Incorporated a volunteer group based in Victoria who in turn can issue sub permits to Wombat Mange Treatment Groups anywhere in Australia to apply the product in accordance with the label requirements and a mange management treatment plan. Non-compliance with the label requirements is an offence under the Agvet Code.

There was discussion about the effectiveness of the application rates specified in the permit, with some members stating they apply more than the specified legal amount. One member was unaware of the APVMA permit and requested more information. No members currently use the product on-park.

ROBERT OLIVER, IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER, WILDLIFE BIODIVERSITY REFORMS, FROM THE WILDLIFE BIODIVERSITY REFORM TEAM NPWS AND MATTHEW MO PROJECT OFFICER - STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER AND ON 19 FEBRUARY. A. Koosmen and C. Flanagan represented NWC at both consultations and separate reports have been circulated via email to reps line.

Update: Native Animal Pets and Non-releasable native animals and the pathways to rehome them.

Latest consultation was held on 19/2. NWC is offered more time to present opinion on the papers (*re-sent to Reps on 22/2 via email Heading "Extension.."*). **Deadline of 2/3/18 for NWC groups to provide comment.**

Wide range of issues was discussed – two issues we need to rethink – Native animal pets – basically looking at issues and options from the November meeting – key concern was rehab groups that have to house and care for them. Options canvassed are Council pounds, RSPCA and other animal shelters. Rehab groups are straining with the resource load but they are the ones with the knowledge to care for them. Meeting raised options about faster rehoming of these animals. Do we allow rehab groups to sell unwanted wildlife pets, mainly reptiles? This suggestion was met with some horror. Adopt a Pet website was mooted as a possibility and we will keep that option alive. It would be a time and effort saver. Is there interest from pet shops and the Pet Industry Association? Question PG: If there is an option to keep these animals ourselves, what is the option there? RO: Generally OEH is advised then a ballot of licensed keepers is held or in some cases herpetology groups assist OEH identify a suitable licensed keeper.

Options are to get some tangible resources into rehab groups who are looking after the animals – possibility of increased licence fees that would allow some funding to get back to affected groups. There is recognition of how much it is costing groups for care of these animals.

Reptile Catch and Release licenses – issued raised:

those licence holders do not do accredited training courses.

Is insurance above board?

Can they identify reptile species?

What happens with injured ones?

Where are they released?

What records are kept?

RO: There is no accredited training course for reptile handlers and this is being looked at so there is a level training playing field. SE Are Catch and Release licensees required to enter records into Bionet? RO advises no requirement.

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Seized animals may be required to be held for too long awaiting court cases. One snake held for 20 years. It is proposed Taronga Wildlife Hospital and John Morony Wildlife Care facility should hold animals that must be retained for court cases, rather than volunteer carers.

NPWS will talk to Police about this proposal. Taronga Wildlife Hospital is under too much pressure with what is “given” to them. RO Are the actual animals really required for court proceedings? Possibility of euthanasia because of holding problems caused some consternation within the group.

KPJ There should be recognition of the role that rehabbers play – they are in most cases the best people to properly look after these animals.

Problem seems to be mainly Sydney Basin, Illawarra and Hunter. Comment that re-homing such animals is not part of General Licences. The greatest difficulty is to stop them coming into rehab in the first place.

Non Releasable fauna. See P 3 of paper to go through various channels. Code of practice has release standards but does not indicate what actions should be taken if an animal should not be released. Euthanasia might be the most appropriate option. It is proposed that Sections 11 and 12 should have an additional standard for unreleasable animals – instructions to guide rehab groups –

Consider euthanasia if appropriate
Contact OEH for approval to retain
Notify OEH to arrange placement

Application for permanent care – clarify the process: 3 ways currently

Essential companion animal
Education animal – intention “internal” use
Scientific research

It is proposed to add a fourth criteria - the animal will be used for conservation breeding. e.g. rehab group/wildlife park could take animal into its collection for breeding for release and/or retention in collection. Release to the wild would require a scientific licence including appropriate pre-release testing protocols (biosecurity, health, etc).

Discussion on retention of unreleasable animals for community education purposes. Sydney Wildlife and Wildlife ARC and HWR all raised their loss of ability to use animals for community education and the deleterious impact on funding opportunities. FAWNA commented that it had secured approval specifically for community education, and questioned if this approval has been withdrawn.

Displaying approved education animals: Robert Oliver to update on current legislation and report back.

Rehoming non-releasables – current process of random ballot of zoos and wildlife parks may not result in the best conservation and best animal welfare situation. It is proposed non-releasable threatened Species should go to a zoo or wildlife park nominated by ZAA (Zoo and Aquarium Association); all other animals can be placed with recipient nominated by FMPA (Fauna and Marine Parks Association).

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Recommend to revise Rehab Policy Clause 27 to indicate placement with a zoo or wildlife park will only be considered if the rehabilitation group does not apply for or obtain permanent care.

OEH going to suggest giving preferences to zoos and wildlife parks that can offer captive breeding or capacity to continue maintaining good level of care and welfare. Rehab groups were concerned about fauna parks' ability to handle a wild animal compared with a captive bred animal. Is the knowledge and experience there about the differences between captive bred and wild animals?

Snake hygiene protocols are going to be revised and updated in consultation with relevant experts and stakeholder representatives.

Discussion (out of meetings) between MM and CF that the zookeepers/fauna park might need to spend some time with the rehabilitator – an Outreach program. There have been occasions where transfers have delivered less than optimum results.

End of discussions with NPWS representatives.

Summary Prepared by NWC Secretary and reviewed by NPWS personnel 22 and 23 February 2018.