

NSW Wildlife Council, Inc.

Meeting Number 6

Wednesday 14 February 2007 at 9.30am

Department of Environment & Conservation
Level 1 43 Bridge Street Hurstville

Minutes

1. Opening of Meeting: Welcome

1.1 Present: Audrey Koosmen (Chair); Lorraine Vass (Secretary) FOK; Joan Hills WCN-Central West; Steve Amesbury Native Animal Network; Ilona Roberts, Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers; Gwen Seznec NRWC; Barbara Witham, Koalas in Care; Chris Neville, Wildlife Aid; Stan Wood, WIRES; Caroline Enfield (WIRES alternate) Sonja Elwood, Sydney Wildlife; Gwen Parry-Jones Wildlife ARC; Don Gowing (Wildlife ARC alternate) Sandra Stewart, IGL; Julia McConnell (IGL alternate); Julia Rose (Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers); Coralie Tarlinton (Wildcare Q)

1.2 Apologies: Christeen McLeod (Koalas in Care); Cheyne Flanagan (Koala Preservation Society of NSW); Ronny Ling (ORRCA); Helen Kennedy (Minute Secretary)

2. Register of Proxies: None

3. Notification of 2007 Representatives:

Written advice (additional to that listed in the agenda) was tabled as follows:

Native Animal Trust Fund Inc.: Audrey Koosmen and Jill Dean

Koalas in Care Inc.: Paul McLeod and Barbara Witham

3.1 Matter arising

The death earlier in the year of independent licensee, Noelene Gordon, was noted.

4. Election of 2007 Committee (Office Bearers)

At this point of the meeting Audrey Koosmen vacated the Chair and Chris Neville conducted the election of office-bearers which had been held over from the Annual General Meeting.

There being one nomination received for each Committee position all nominees were elected unopposed.

Chair: Audrey Koosmen

Vice Chair: Stan Wood

Secretary: Lorraine Vass

Treasurer: Joan Hills

Media Officer: Sandra Stewart

5. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting Number 5 held Saturday 11 November 2007

Barbara Witham **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that the Minutes as circulated be accepted as read and confirmed.

Motion carried

5.1 Business Arising

5.1.1 Statewide Insurance Update

Lorraine reported that the letters to secretaries outlining the insurance issue had been sent out and that revised Certificates of Currency dated 8 December, 3 January and 29 January 2007 had been received.

Action: Stan undertook to check with AON on the following:

- (a) Whether claims needed to be made through the Council.
- (b) Whether periodic payments can be made on premiums.

5.1.2 **NWC Logo update**

Pro bono drafts were circulated. A variation utilizing a map of NSW drawn by Steve was supported by the majority of those present for further development.

Action: Steve agreed to refine design and circulate by email. Feedback within a fortnight

5.1.3 **Council Newsletter**

Lorraine spoke to the options which had been circulated with the agenda. There was general agreement that approved articles on the Council and its business be submitted to published magazines and that the Media Officer would prepare periodic reports in line with the cycle of meetings for posting on Ozark.

Actions: Lorraine to complete draft article prepared for *Australian Wildlife* for approval by Executive (deadline 15 March)

Stan to submit signed-off article to *RSPCA News*

Sandra to draft letter to Ozark moderator and draft report for Executive approval.

5.1.4 **NSW Wildlife Survey – Koala Records - Payment**

The meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair and Dan Lunney was unable to be arranged. The matter is held over until the next meeting.

At this point the meeting was addressed by guest speakers, Judith Hallinan President and Co-founder of the Wildlife Assistance & Information Foundation Inc. and Consultant Veterinarian, Derek Spielman

The Foundation was established in 2003 with the purpose of supporting and improving the health of wildlife individuals and the communities in which they live, through providing health services, research and education.

Its major programme to date is the *Disaster Relief Project* which is aimed at addressing those situations which are big enough to swamp local carers but not big enough to mobilize a world-wide rescue team. Examples are a flying fox colony hit by a heat wave, a microbat colony flooded out of a drainpipe, a forest being razed by bushfire, wetlands flooded with a chemical.

The Foundation's 50 members are trained carers and back-up people. It responds by invitation from the licensed group/individual where the disaster has occurred in a supporting capacity. Members are spread across Australia with a concentration in New South Wales.

The Foundation's objects are:

Health Services: promoting wildlife welfare and supporting populations and the environment

Research: supporting research into health issues for individual animals, population studies, habitat needs and health, and biodiversity. The Foundation may carry out the research itself or promote research being conducted by others. It seeks to publish research in a format that is usable by carers.

Education: promoting an understanding of welfare (animal health), environmental (habitat and populations) and biodiversity issues for wildlife.

General, advanced and specialist courses are promoted under the banner of *The Science of Wildlife Rehabilitation*. One general course has been held to date. Accreditation as a recognized training provider will be sought during 2007.

Derek Spielman joined the Foundation in October 2005 to take up the position of Head of Health Services. He is an experienced wildlife veterinarian and he also lectures in histopathology at the University of Sydney's School of Veterinary Sciences.

The Foundation's part-time (one day a week) Wildlife Veterinary Clinic opened in a practice at Balmain and since June 2006 has operated out of a practice in St Ives. More animals are being referred by carers in metropolitan Sydney. Derek is happy to provide advice to mainstream veterinarians on wildlife matters. The Clinic aims to providing a 24/7 service. Its contact phone number is 9456 0452.

The Chair thanked Judith and Derek who stayed for morning tea.

5.1.5 Working parties - terms of references

5.1.5.1 Flying Fox Working Party

Gwen Parry-Jones agreed to draw up terms of reference including potential for inclusion of non-council representatives.

Action: Lorraine Vass to re-post the Working Party Terms of Reference template to Gwen.

5.1.5.2 Research and Statistics Working Party

The circulated draft will be discussed further by the R & S Working Party for re-submission at the next meeting.

Action: Working party members to consider points made in Lorraine's email of 5 February 2007.

5.1.5.3 Education

Coralie Tarlinton proposed compiling a state-wide listing of trainers.

Action: Coralie to compile a list of trainers and Education Terms of Reference
Lorraine to forward Working Party Terms of Reference template.

5.1.6 Members' Guide to Participation in Planning and Development (*Project Proposal*)

Stan reported that work is in progress. He reiterated the note of caution expressed by Brendon at the November meeting. Both NATF and WIRES have had negative experiences in terms of potential misuse of rehabilitators as "environmental consultants". There is also a tendency for developers/contractors to interpret rehabilitators' expressions of co-operation to assist in the mitigation of clearing impacts on wildlife as expressions of support for development. There needs to be a clear set of guidelines established to ensure that rehabilitators do not become – nor can be seen to become - part of the approval process. Any payments for mitigation of impact must be isolated from any perception that it is associated with the development approval process.

Action: Groups which are presently active in land-use issues to forward input to Stan.

5.1.7 Tax Concession Charity and Deductibility Gift Recipient Status

Stan reported that he has inserted the mandatory model clauses for environmental organizations which reflect the requirements of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*. He is still to make enquiries of the Department of Environment and Water regarding those groups which are ineligible to be on the Register of Environmental Organizations due to their membership size.

Action: Stan to ring John Heaghney to ascertain nature of Ministerial discretion.

5.1.8. Review of Constitution

Stan and Gwen still working on the review. Julia McConnell queried why the executive is limited to five members. Stan explained that was a collective decision of the Steering Committee.

Stan has amended the AGM section to allow nominations for Office bearers from the floor as well as written nominations received in advance.

Action: Stan to circulate amended constitution within 48 hours. Further suggested amendments to Stan and Gwen (subject to her email problems being solved.)

5.1.9 Membership (and choice of delegate) of the Nature Conservation Council

Stan Wood **moved** and Barbara Witham **seconded** that the Council apply for associate membership and that Lorraine Vass be the Council's delegate to the NCC annual conference. **Motion Carried**

Action: Secretary to forward letter requesting membership to NCC Office Co-ordinator.

5.1.10 State-wide Data Collection

Expressions of interest in seeing the WIRES database have been received from NATF, FOK, TVWC, NRWC, Sydney Wildlife, Wildlife Aid and Koalas in Care.

Action: Stan to remind Patrick Connors about forwarding his CV and to work on roadshow proposal for winter 2007.

5.1.11 Amendment of Member's representative brief position description to include a 7th point: *Reports on Council matters as required by member(s)*.

Lorraine Vass **moved** and Gwen Seznec **seconded** that the member's representative brief position description be amended to include, *reports on Council matters as required by member(s)*. **Motion Carried**

5.1.12 Government Payment of Veterinarians (*Project Proposal*).

Stan is still working on the proposal. Any input welcomed.

6. Reports

The Treasurer tabled her report comprising receipts and payment journals for the period 9 November 2006 to 9 February 2007 and an accounts reconciliation. The closing balance of \$20,824.88 at 23 January 2007 was noted. Payment was authorized for reimbursements in the amount of \$1035.02 .presented on behalf of Lorraine Vass, Joan Hills, Julia Rose, Coralie Tarlinton and Ilona Roberts. (The latter on receipt of reimbursement form and travel receipt.)

Chris Neville **moved** and Barbara Witham **seconded** that the Treasurer's report be received and noted and that payments presented to the meeting be authorized. **Motion Carried**

7. General Business

7.1. Council members' participation

Following discussion on the current range of "participation levels" and what constitutes active membership it was agreed to amend the constitution to provide for minimum participation levels. When amendments to the Constitution are finalized, yet another letter, *encouraging* active membership will be sent to all members.

7.2 Council's position on licensing applications

Points raised in discussion included the potential for conflicts of interest; issues of trust; DEC being resourced and empowered to implement its policy (existing and appropriate amendments arising from current review); Council comfortable with being involved in development of principle and guidelines for treatment of new

licence applications, not individual cases; and Council appreciative of consultation opportunities whether they are with DEC or politicians.

Stan Wood **moved** and Joan Hill **seconded** that a letter be written to the Minister for the Environment and copied to the Director General DEC stating that the Council's position on licensing applications is that DEC be supported and resourced to implement its existing policies without political interference. The Council is appreciative of any opportunity for consultation and wishes to have input into policy development and guidelines which might arise through the review in progress. The letter should also mention the need for boundaries clarification.

Motion Carried.

Action: Secretary to draft letter for circulation to the Executive

7.3 Council's services to rehabilitators

The consensus was that the Council's activities during its first year of operation are demonstration enough that it is serving its constituents. Further that expenditure of time and energy convincing rehabilitators of Council's intentions would be less effective than the same expenditure of energy towards delivering results.

7.4 2007 priorities *Please refer to item 7: Priorities and Planning 2006/2007 of the Minutes of the AGM, Steve's email of 19 November 2006 and items 5.1.6 and 5.1.12 above.*

Steve spoke to his emailed proposition for a 'strategic plan' for working towards (a) agreed minimum standards of care, (b) a considered response to DEC's reviewed Wildlife Rehabilitation Policy, and (c) standardised statistics.

Sonja read out the priorities identified at the Council's inaugural meeting, concluding that most were either achieved or are being dealt with.

Lorraine referred to commitments made at the November meetings, including securing ongoing insurance funding, planning guidelines, payment of veterinarians and investigating options for a state-wide database.

Consensus was reached that all existing goals (including those decided upon at the Council's inaugural meeting in October 2005 as well as those referred to above) be re-examined and re-prioritised at the next meeting along with any further suggestions.

Action: Sonja to extract and list all statements of priority for circulation with the agenda of the next meeting.

7.5 Request for leave of absence from 10 March to 21 April 2007

The Secretary's request for leave granted.

7.6 Department of Environment and Conservation

Brendon Neilly was unable to attend the meeting. During a very brief appearance he reported that the letter written to the Minister regarding future insurance coverage was with Geoff McDonald. Other issues in the letter, eg 7-day holding rule will be included in an 'omnibus' of miscellaneous amendments to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* in preparation but that there was no time-frame yet set for presentation to parliament. Inappropriate feeding of wildlife is also to be included.

8. Correspondence

8.1 & 8.2 Outgoing and incoming correspondence

Coralie Tarlinton **moved** and Joan Hills **seconded** that the incoming correspondence be received and that the outgoing correspondence be endorsed. **Motion Carried**

Matter arising

It was agreed that Scott Cardamatis, Advisor to the NSW Minister for the Environment be invited to the Council's next meeting to discuss strategy for political support and funds.

Action: Secretary to issue invitation by email

9. Other Business

9.1 Meeting options

Sandra put forward a proposition to hold three meetings a year – a one day meeting in February, followed by two two day meetings in mid-year (this one to be an ordinary meeting and working group meetings) and October/November to include the AGM.

Action: Sandra to post options on List and if the option is preferred to develop the proposal.

9.2 Importing bearded dragons

Stan tabled the document, *Impact assessment of importing a live bearded dragon (Pogona Vitticeps) into Australia as a household pet, prepared for the Department for the Environment and Heritage for amendment of the List of Specimens Suitable for Live Import, December 2006.*

Joan Hills **moved** and Ilona Roberts **seconded** that a letter be written to the Department of Environment and Conservation pointing out the precedence for importation this application would set and the potential for disease importation into Australian reptiles that may be created if it is successful. **Motion Carried**

Action: Stan to draft the letter and forward it to the Secretary for formatting and dispatch to the Department, and copied to Brendon Neilly.

9.3 The Land reporting on a pet wombat

Joan tabled the February 8, 2007 issue of *The Land* in which a pet wombat held by a member of the public is shown to have been displayed at agricultural shows in Tamworth and Taralga. She has given Brendon Neilly a copy to expedite investigation by the Department.

9.4 St Valentine's Raffle Draw

The raffle for the sapphire ring was drawn by a DEC employee and the winner, Mr Darran Singh of Lismore, advised of his good fortune by telephone. The scanner which was the prize to the group which sold the winning ticket was handed to Gwen Seznec of Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers.

10. Votes of thanks

Joan Hills **moved** and Steve Amesbury **seconded** that Sandra Stewart be thanked for the enthusiasm with which she assumed the duties of Treasurer following the resignation of Kay Brady and the competent way in which she has continued the work. **Motion Carried**

11. Future Meeting Dates (including AGM)

Contingent on the outcome of item 9.1 Meeting options, the next meeting will be held at Hurstville on Tuesday 15 May 2007, to start at 9.30pm

Action: Chair to provisionally book room.

The second Annual general Meeting will be held over the weekend of 27-28 October 2007.

Action: Vice Chair to check availability of The Centre, Randwick and make booking.

12. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 4pm.