

MINUTES  
NSW WILDLIFE COUNCIL (NWC) EXECUTIVE MEETING  
HELD AT DECCW, HURSTVILLE ON 17 DECEMBER 2009

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Present: Marny Bonner - ASR / Minutes;  
Audrey Koosmen - NATF / Chair;  
Shirley Lack - NARG / Secretary / Insurance Officer;  
Julia McConnell – Independent General Licensees / Treasurer;  
Stan Wood – WIRES / Vice-Chair

Guests: Phil Machin - NARG;  
Elena Guarracino – LAOKO / Revenue Officer;

The meeting opened 10.40 a.m. Audrey welcomed and thanked everyone for attending, then outlined the purpose of the meeting – to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the NWC as described in the discussion paper recently circulated to Council members by Phil Machin, and the responses subsequently received. Thanks to all those groups who responded to the discussion paper.

#### **Council structure/Committee Structure**

The comments received by email and letters were discussed. Only a minority of members contributed to the discussion. It was agreed that there was not a broad consensus to change the current structure.

It had been suggested that the Council adopt a more equitable voting system, i.e., pro rata relative to size of member group. Audrey pointed out that this issue was thoroughly discussed when the Council was formed, at a time when a large number of members were present, and the UN model was opted for at the time, i.e., one member organisation = 1 vote. The meeting agreed to recommend that the current structure of voting arrangements not be changed.

#### **Delegating Authority**

It was suggested that Office Bearer positions and jobs such as Media and Revenue be given delegated authority to act on non-contentious issues and not depend on Council members agreeing to a proposal,

MOVED: Marny Bonner / Shirley Lack: that a recommendation be made to the full council that delegated authority be assigned to the Media and Revenue officers to proceed with their respective initiatives, subject to consultation with the relevant species specialists or local organisations, and with the endorsement of no less than two members of the Executive.

Carried

#### **Paid Secretary / CEO**

The NWC discussion document proposed the option of a paid CEO/Secretary.

- Correspondence from NANA and FAWNA - opposed.
- Correspondence from FOK, LAOKO & ASR – endorsed the proposal.

While acknowledging the opposition of NANA and FAWNA to the notion of a paid secretary or CEO, the meeting agreed that it would be beneficial for the Council to continue aspiring to obtaining a paid admin assistant in the future as and when funding becomes available, subject to majority approval of the Council. It was agreed that the most urgent need was for admin

assistance. The provision of an admin staff would require funding and the identification of office space.

## **Membership Fees / Structure**

In order to encourage member groups to become more engaged with the NWC, and to allow for those groups that do not help, the concept of full / associate membership structure was discussed, along with membership fees. It was recommended that this be further discussed at the AGM.

MOVED: Stan Wood / Seconded Julia McConnell: that the issue of Council membership fees be included in the agenda of the AGM for general discussion, and that arguments for and against received from members be circulated with the agenda.

Carried

## **Funding**

It was noted that DECCW have advised that the 3 years' funding offered at the formation of the Council expired as at 2009. Funding supplied by the RTA remains current and is due to expire in 2010. Elena forwarded a letter to DECCW/Sally Barnes requesting ongoing funding and asking for a meeting between Sally & Audrey for today, which didn't occur due to an oversight at DECCW. Elena will follow up with DECCW to organise another time.

Phil Machin and Elena Guarracino stressed the need for the NWC to continue to complete the Impact Statement as it is a vital support document for future funding applications. Further, DECCW and the NWC might co-operate towards compilation of meaningful statistics regarding wildlife rescue that would be mutually beneficial to both organisations.

## **Workload**

The Council will continue to encourage the participation of membership groups. The meeting agreed that the strategy of building sub-groups and teams to assist with specific issues and tasks be revisited in order to spread workload, and that processes be established.

Other strategies included reducing the number of projects. Elena suggested a review of core business to rationalise current projects at the next Strategic Planning meeting and taking a more proactive approach generally.

It was noted that the first priority, the Minimum Standards, will be out early January on DECCW's website.

## **Communication**

- Newsletters - review frequency and presentation: the recent format produced by Phil was endorsed, albeit whoever writes the newsletter could have a different format. Ideally it would be issued quarterly. Phil offered to produce one around early February. (In the meantime we provide feedback about this meeting immediately by letter)

## **Website / Webmaster**

Greg's comments were acknowledged and discussed.

- There is a need for a back-up person to assist with managing the website: it was agreed to put this to the members (with position description established).
- The public listing of email addresses on website was not agreed, however it was felt that the list of member organisations on the NWC website could be linked.
- We invite Greg to bring a presentation to us to the March AGM regarding his suggestions.

## **Quorum**

While the Council's aim is to represent all members, the reality is that the current quorum (50% of members + 1 = 13) is not working. The problem of attendance – even though it was only falling short by one or two – was preventing the Council from conducting its business, including the 2009 Annual General Meeting. Audrey advised that an application for extension has been submitted to the Registry of Co-operatives and Associations (as stipulated by the Office of Fair Trading) and they had agreed to an extension until March 31, 2010.

Points of discussion included:

- it was essential that the Council remain operational and productive while continuing to provide an opportunity for all members to participate, but at the same time we cannot be held back by those members who do not want to actively participate;
- if members are unable to attend meetings then the opportunity for teleconference involvement should continue, and that members be encouraged to email any proposals or items for discussion;
- the suggestion to hold meetings elsewhere in the State was not agreed;
- the suggestion to hold meetings at the weekends was discussed. Given the experience of non-attendance at the proposed weekend AGM, it was felt that changing the day would not help attendance at meetings and it could become a lot worse at weekends. Members would be encouraged to identify reps who can attend weekday meetings.
- any changes could be subject to review at the next (2010) AGM.

It was unanimously agreed that a workable quorum would be seven members, including no less than three executive office bearers (representing a majority of the five executive members).

MOVED Stan Woods / Julia McConnell: That it be recommended to the Council that item 28 (2) of the constitution stipulating the quorum be changed to:

*Seven (7) council members present in person or by teleconference including at least three Executive members (being members entitled under these rules to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a general meeting. Alternates standing in for members will count towards the quorum.*

Carried

Stan offered to draft the suggested changes to the constitution. It was noted that a new Associations Incorporation Act (2009) will come into effect in early 2010 and consequently other changes to the constitution would be required in the near future.

MOVED Stan Wood / Julia McConnell:

- a) That the Executive convenes a Special General Meeting to not only ratify the previous non-quorate meetings, but also approve constitutional changes, to be held Wednesday 24 March 2010 at DECCW Hurstville, commencing 9 a.m.
- b) That an General Meeting and the 2009 Annual General Meeting also be held on Wednesday 24 March 2010. Carried

MOVED Stan Wood / Marny Bonner: Subject to the approval of the NSW Office of Fair trading that the postponed 2009 AGM be held on 24 March 2010. Carried

The order of business will be: Special General Meeting; General Meeting; 2009 AGM.

## **Timing of Meetings**

To be included on the agenda for the March meeting. With regard to the AGM it was noted that, according to the current constitution, the AGM is “to be convened on such date and at such time as the Council sees fit”, therefore there is no need to formally alter the constitution regarding the date.

Some reps had sought to move the NWC AGM to a quieter period of the year. It was agreed to recommend to the Council that the 2010 AGM be held on the last weekend in August, continuing the current practice of meeting for two days, i.e.

Saturday 28 August 2010 – General Meeting;

Sunday 29 August 2010 – AGM + Review/Strategic Planning.

The meeting closed at 3.40 p.m.

*Cleared by*

**Audrey Koosmen**  
Chair, NWC

15 January 2010