



**Seventh NSW Wildlife Council
Chair's Report
to the Annual General Meeting
Sunday 26 August 2012**



Achieving optimal outcomes for Australian Wildlife

Membership and representation 2011-2012

Organisation	Representative	Alternate
Australian Seabird Rescue, Inc	Rochelle Ferris	Kathrina Southwell
Corrective Services NSW (John Moroney WCC)	Peter Daniels	
Cudgong Wildlife Carers	Margaret Squire	Carolyn Cannon
F.A.W.N.A. (NSW) Inc.	Meredith Ryan	John Gorham
Friends of the Koala, Inc.	Lorraine Vass	Fiona Dawson
Hunter Koala Preservation Society, Inc.	Jill Taylor (to 15 October 2011) Geoff Bartlett	Loreto Gray
Independent General Licencees	Julia McConnell	
Koalas in Care, Inc.	Paul McLeod	Mandy Penhall
Koala Preservation Society of NSW, Inc.	Cheyne Flanagan	Peter Schulties
Looking After our Kosciuszko Orphans, Inc.	James Fitzgerald (to 24 July) Pete Graham	Pete Graham (to 24 July 2012); Scott Vamvakaris
Native Animal Rescue Group	Shirley Lack	Phil Machin
Native Animal Trust Fund Inc.	Audrey Koosmen	Lisa Lowe
Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Inc.	Sam Kendal (to 7 Feb. 2012) Trish Razzi (to 12 April 2012) Ilona Roberts (from 17 July 2012)	Cheryl Cochran
Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers, Inc.	Jacqueline Maisy	Colin Wood
ORRCA, Inc.	Shona Lorigan	Alison Cooper
Pet Porpoise Pool Pty Ltd	Paige Sinclair	Greg Pickering
Rescue & Rehabilitation of Australian Native Animals (RRANA)	Denise Singleton	Alicia Stewart
Saving Our Native Animals, Inc.	Ian Gowanloch	Georgia Gowanloch
Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services, Inc.	Helen Kennedy	Kerry Ellis
Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers, Inc.	Ilona Roberts (to 17 July)	Julie Firkins
Wildcare Queanbeyan, Inc.	Coralie Tarlinton	Greg Tarlinton
Wildcare Aid, Inc.	Joanne Kelly	Bruce Mulligan
Wildcare ARC, Inc.	Jan Brazel	Gwen Parry-Jones
Wildlife Carers Mudgee Region, Inc.	Andrew Hudson	Chris Cooke (to 16 May 2012) Graham Wardell
Wildcare Rescue South Coast, Inc.	Jane Mills	Ian Ross
WIRES, Inc.	Caroline Enfield	Leanne Taylor

Meeting attendance 2011-2012

Organisation	#22: 29 Nov.	#23: 28 Feb.	#24 SGM 22 May	#25 AGM 25/26 Aug.
Australian Seabird Rescue, Inc	P	P	P	P
Corrective Services NSW (John Moroney WCC)	N	N	N	N
Cudgong Wildlife Carers	N	N	N	N
F.A.W.N.A. (NSW) Inc.	P	P	P	P
Friends of the Koala, Inc.	p	p	p	P
Hunter Koala Preservation Society, Inc.	P	A	P	P
Independent General Licencees	P	P	P	P
Koalas in Care, Inc.	A	A	A	N
Koala Preservation Society of NSW, Inc.	N	N	N	N
Looking After our Kosciuszko Orphans, Inc.	N	P	A	P
Native Animal Rescue Group	P	P	P	P
Native Animal Trust Fund Inc.	P	P	A P(T)	P
Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers, Inc.	P	P	N	P
Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers, Inc.	P	P	P	P
ORRCA, Inc.	A	P	P	p
Pet Porpoise Pool Pty Ltd	N	A	A	A
Rescue & Rehabilitation of Australian Native Animals (RRANA)	N	A	A	A
Saving Our Native Animals, Inc.	N	N	N	N
Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services, Inc.	A	P	A	P
Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers, Inc.	P	P	P	N
Wildcare Queanbeyan, Inc.	P	P	A	P
Wildcare Aid, Inc.	P	P	A	P
Wildcare ARC, Inc.	A	N	N	N
Wildlife Carers Mudgee Region, Inc.	N	N	P	P
Wildcare Rescue South Coast, Inc.	P	P	A	P
WIRES, Inc.	P	P	P	P A

Legend: P = Present; P(T) = Teleconference; A = Apology; N = Not in attendance and no apology recorded

Cover photo acknowledgements: Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers Inc., Friends of the Koala, Inc., Australian Seabird Rescue, Inc.

Highlights

- Management Committee extended to include two general members
- Two motions supported by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's Annual Conference
- Register of consultancy assistance for small projects established
- Meeting with Ms Sally Barnes, A/Chief Executive, Office of Environment & Heritage and Mr Bob Conroy, A/Dep. Chief Executive, Parks & Wildlife Group
- Three issues of NWC Newsletter published and distributed
- Facebook and Twitter pages opened
- Release on Federal Koala listing taken up (and expanded) in regional online media
- Proposed Public Fund Management Committee appointed
- Constitution reviewed and amended
- Strategic Plan: *Moving Forward 2011-2014* adopted
- Small Grants Program for Wildlife Carers trialled
- Partnership with Australian Fauna Care in developing a state-wide Animal Rescue Smart Phone Application (App.)
- Paper on the role and progress of NWC presented to the 8th Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference
- Promotional brochure finalised for printing
- Participation in the Australian Wildlife Forum agreed
- Five General Meetings, including this Annual General meeting, one Special General Meeting and four Management Committee Meetings held
- Three guest presenters: Suzanne Robinson, Manager General Emergencies Preparedness and Response, DPI (February); Corinne Orscheg, Senior Project Manager, Management Effectiveness Unit, OEH (May); Melinda Murray, A/Director Conservation Programs Division, OEH (August)

Submissions

- Draft NSW Commercial Kangaroo Harvesting Management Plan 2012 - 2016
- Royal Botanical Garden & Domain Trust Flying Fox Re-location (several)
- Draft Environment Assessment (Silver Fox Report) for an application to amend the Live Importation List to import *Vulpes vulpes* (Red fox, Silver fox)
- Supporting review of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*
- Supporting Lismore City Council's Draft Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management for South-Eastern Lismore
- Supporting nomination of the Koala for *vulnerable to extinction* listing under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Wildlife Rehabilitators and Firearms Licensing – Animal Welfare Genuine Reason (several)
- Cruel hunting practices of turtles and dugongs
- TransGrid's Draft Stroud to Lansdowne Project Options Selection Report
- Flooding impacts on wombats
- *Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2012* – unsupervised hunting by children
- Proposed amendments to the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*
- Proposed flying fox management conservation agreements
- Proposed NSW Koala Summit
- NSW kangaroo management – proposed change to the S121 and S123 occupier licence applications

Preamble

It is with pleasure that I report on the business of the Seventh NSW Wildlife Council. The year was not without its challenges and these were met purposefully. The Council made very satisfactory progress in several areas, initiated new projects and approaches and continued as the vehicle for valuable networking.

The work represented by the Highlights and by the submissions we lodged is commendable; even more so when account is taken of the number of active representatives and alternates. Fleshing out some of the year's activities in more detail will both add to the record of achievement and indicate areas where we need to do better.

Governance

The comprehensive review of the Constitution undertaken by Phil Machin and Meredith Ryan took several months and involved periodic progress reports and invitations for feedback. The result has clarified several anomalies and achieved compliance with the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* and *Associations Incorporation Regulation 2010*. That a few members are not fully supportive of all the changes is acknowledged.

Governance has been further strengthened by several other initiatives including expansion of the Management Committee by two positions of general member and amending the position descriptions accordingly, the adoption of an Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures for declarations of interest by member representatives.

Participation

A little over half of the Council's membership is regularly represented at quarterly meetings. The representatives (and in most cases the alternates) of all but one member are registered on the Council's email list. In the main postings are made by those representatives who attend meetings.

Workload sharing has been difficult for the Council throughout its existence. Looking back it is probably true to say that the situation has improved as membership has grown. However, membership is now very close to being complete.

Indicators of participation such as raising agenda items, proposing motions, contributing to discussion and decision-making, attending meetings, undertaking and completing assignments, taking on Management Committee and other named positions suggest that work generated by the Council is resting on the shoulders of nine or ten individuals at best.

Communication and Promotion

Communicating and promoting the Council's role and activities continue to be patchy. Moments of encouragement, e.g. the interest in some quarters regarding the media release on the Federal listing of the koala, opening the Facebook and Twitter accounts, distributing three issues of the newsletter and presentation of the draft brochure faltered due to poor collective commitment.

Arguably the least satisfactory area of the Council's public face is the stale website. Options open to the Council for rectifying this situation range from commissioning professional assistance to using online web tools such as Weebly, which once set up, can be modified by anyone with a little talent and a web browser.

Partnerships

The Council continues to enjoy financial support for member insurance coverage from the Office of Environment and Heritage. The Office also provides considerable in-kind support including the valuable guidance of several officers, the venue and hospitality for quarterly meetings and guest presenters. Copies of the codes of practice and the policy on rehabilitation of fauna on CD were made available for distribution during the year.

NSW Roads and Maritime Services also continued its financial contribution to the Council's operation.

Several members were encouraged to consider developing Memorandums of Understanding for participating in emergencies with the Department of Primary Industries following Suzanne Robinson's presentation in February.

The Council's advocacy initiatives have been greatly assisted by the advice of the NSW Environmental Defender's Office, particularly on issues related to kangaroo management.



We continued to use the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's conferences as forums for gaining broader support for issues of concern to Council members. Motions related to the conservation of grey-headed flying foxes and koalas were supported by the NCC 2011 Annual Conference held in October and attended by Ilona Roberts and me. In May I presented on koalas at the NCC Regional Conference held in Coffs Harbour.

Member Assistance

Putting aside the Council's member insurance cover, the Small Grants Program introduced through the year is the Council's most tangible response to date to directly supporting wildlife rehabilitators in their day-to-day work.

Although a trial, the call for applications has drawn a small number of good quality projects which Council members, through their representatives, will have voted on by the end of this term.

Potentially the Small Grants Program is the perfect vehicle for raising the Council's profile among rank and file rehabilitators so it is pleasing that it has got off to such a good start.

Member groups have benefited from the distribution of information on the Work Health and Safety legislation introduced at the beginning of the year.

As mentioned earlier, maintaining energy and commitment is difficult; even more so in a peak body in which member diversity and priorities can introduce tensions which challenge effective management.

A case in point are the issues of firearms licensing and training which emerged early in the new year. Not all Council members have need to authorise firearms use, however the majority do. Interest in changes to the Genuine Reason Animal Welfare made by the NSW Firearms Registry has therefore been lively.

The Council's negotiations, which must encompass the needs of all interested members, with the Registry to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the licensing issue and to the training requirements are being pursued in a cordially professional manner.

Concluding Remarks

The network of volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation groups which the Council represents plays an important role in relieving the suffering of protected animals, conserving wildlife populations, fostering community understanding of native animals and the natural environment and in broadening scientific knowledge of wildlife biology.

The State government's 10-year plan, *NSW 2021* is directing the public sector. Its goals, targets and actions are setting priorities for funding and guiding decision-making.

The agency to which we are accountable, the Office of Environment and Heritage has recently undergone a structural realignment, some elements of which may well impact on the future regulation of our sector. These are uncertain times in which the Council would do well to familiarise itself with the Government's vision, keep its collective ear to the ground and be ready to deal with change positively.

On a personal note, I have many people to thank for assisting me to fulfil the role of Chair. I thank my Management Committee colleagues for their support and the contribution they have made to those particular projects and submissions for which they took responsibility.

I thank Meredith Ryan for her assistance as Public Officer and for her work on the Constitution and Phil Machin for his work on the Newsletter, the Constitution, kangaroo management and for assuming responsibility for expediting action on firearms licensing and training.

I congratulate all member representatives and alternates who have participated in progressing the Council's business during this term.

I also thank Ron Haering, Manager of the Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit for his guidance when called upon, and Allan McLean and others for their invaluable assistance with meeting room bookings and the all-important lunch and refreshments arrangements.

Last but not least I thank Caroline Enfield for her sharp editorial eye, Shirley Lack for those unforgettable drives to the airport and beyond, Rochelle Ferris for several companionable working Lismore lunches and my long-suffering husband Rick for tolerating a year which tipped the already uneasy balance between my conservation volunteering and our family life.

Management Committee 2011 - 2012



Left to Right: Vice-Chair, Caroline Enfield (WIRES); General Member, Ilona Roberts (Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers/Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers); Media Officer, James Fitzgerald (LAOKO/Wildcare Queanbeyan); General Member, Audrey Koosmen (Native Animal Trust Fund); Chair, Lorraine Vass (Friends of the Koala); Treasurer, Shirley Lack (Native Animal Rescue Group); Secretary, Rochelle Ferris (Australian Seabird Rescue).

Lorraine Vass
Chair