

NSW Wildlife Council Inc.
Achieving Optimal Outcomes for Australian Wildlife
February 2010 Newsletter



Introduction

The last NWC newsletter was published in September last year. At that time the NWC was looking forward to its AGM at the end of November. However this did not happen, as the majority of NWC members were not able to attend. There was no quorum, so it had to be postponed.

Getting wildlife group member representatives to come to NWC meetings has been a problem. When a quorum is not achieved, business cannot be formally conducted and decisions made.

The NWC committee (Executive office bearers) met in December to address this problem and propose some changes to the NWC constitution. A letter was sent to the Presidents of the member groups with the outcome and it is discussed in this newsletter along with other topics of interest.

**Annual, Special & General Meetings
Will be held on
Wednesday 24 March 2010
From 9.00 AM
At DECCW, Hurstville Offices**

So what's the problem?

Last year, including the postponed AGM, the NWC did not have a quorum for three out of four meetings. It came close on most occasions, but fell short. It is not surprising this happened. The NWC constitution demands a 50% turn out of members to conduct business.

Compared to other voluntary incorporated associations this is a tough ask. The NWC needs at least 13 out of 25 members to take part in meetings. Other associations, probably including your wildlife group, only require a few members to be present out of perhaps hundreds of members to conduct business. This is the pragmatic approach and acknowledges that with the best will in the world not everyone can get to meetings. For the NWC it is

a more difficult situation, as members are being asked to travel very long distances.

The NWC Executive has recommended that the NWC quorum be reduced to seven council members, including three office-bearers. This is much more in line with other associations and will allow the NWC to be more effective. It is hoped that this change will be adopted at the Special General Meeting to be held on 24 March 2010. It is vital that member groups are represented at this meeting both to agree to the proposed changes and to support the NWC.

Stay informed

Greg Tarlinton has done a good job in getting the NWC website up to date. If you want to see what is going on, then have a browse. See who belongs to the NWC and who has key responsibilities. The minutes of meetings, newsletters, some correspondence and policy documents are all available.

If you have a burning issue that affects all wildlife groups in NSW, then you might discuss it with your wildlife group NWC representative. Most groups have an 'alternate' representative too, so there is more than one person to talk to.

The NWC, through its member groups, belongs to everyone. It has become a key point of contact for Government and non-Government departments and agencies to help to shape changes to policies that affect wildlife rehabilitation in NSW.

Funding of NWC

(Revenue Officer, Elena Guarracino (Looking After Our Kosciuszko Orphans) writes...)

We have been following up on a letter sent to the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (DECCW) with regard to the need for ongoing NWC funding. A strong argument has been put together, based on data given to Phil Machin by some wildlife groups, as part of the impact statement work. This data has quantified the work member groups undertake on behalf of

DECCW. For example, phone calls from the public for assistance with injured animals; the relocation of snakes; and removing dead or injured animals from the road. The information has also been used to estimate the volunteer time and cost involved in working with injured or orphaned animals.

The approach to the NRMA for funding was not successful – they prefer to support other charities. There are some other funding opportunities that will be pursued this year.

Flying Foxes in the Sydney Royal Botanical Gardens

Well done to Ilona Roberts! Ilona, who represents the Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers on the NWC, has been the lead in rebutting the proposed relocation of the Grey Headed Flying Foxes in the Sydney Royal Botanical Gardens for some time. This is a contentious issue and there has been an ongoing ‘battle’ to prevent the Flying Foxes from being dispersed, as the proposed method is not proven and would cause great trauma to the animals.

Ilona provided comments on the Draft Public Environment Report on behalf of the NWC in December.

2010 and the Boobook Declaration

(Lorraine Vass (Friends of Koala) writes.....)

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity (see <http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/>). Will it be a turning point for Australia’s wildlife? At the very least the year presents an opportunity to celebrate the beauty and diversity of the natural world and to recognise that the nation’s biodiversity is in serious trouble.

In early December NWC member, Friends of the Koala [Northern Rivers], along with 40 or so other groups across the country signed on to the Boobook Declaration. The Declaration is auspiced by Friends of the Earth Australia and calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Acknowledge the critical importance of safeguarding biodiversity as part of Australia’s climate change response and commit to correspondingly urgent action to address the systemic drivers of biodiversity loss.
2. Increase investment in biodiversity and ecosystem protection, restoration and management to at least \$9 billion over the

three years to 2012 and establish an independent consultative process into future funding and stewardship of Australia’s terrestrial, aquatic and marine diversity.

3. Restore and increase publicly funded research capacity.
4. Develop education and training programs for all sectors of the community.

The full text of the Boobook Declaration is at www.boobook.org.au/declaration.htm You can help by asking groups with which you are associated to sign on to the Boobook Declaration and commit to working for its implementation in 2010. This might include persuading your federal member to back the Boobook action plan.

2010 National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference

The 7th NWRC will be held in Adelaide 22-24 June 2010. Interested? Check out the NWRC website at www.nwrc.com.au.

RSPCA Australia Scientific Seminar

The RSPCA is hosting a seminar in Canberra on Tuesday 23 February 2010 at the CSIRO Discovery Centre, Canberra. The topic of discussion is “Convergence or conflict: Animal welfare in wildlife management and conservation”.

See: <http://www.rspca.org.au/what-we-do/science-and-policies/science-seminar.html>

Closing in on Minimum Standards

DECCW expect to release the draft Minimum Standards policy document very soon. This document will provide minimum standards for the rescue, rehabilitation and release of wildlife. It will receive a wide distribution both online and in hard copy and there will be an opportunity to give feedback.

This newsletter has been prepared for NWC members (wildlife groups) and individual rehabbers. Comments and contributions can be forwarded to the secretary@nwc.org.au.