

November 2010 Newsletter

Introduction

Since the May newsletter the NWC has been active in attending a Centre for Volunteering conference – Ignite Volunteers; attendance at the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference (Adelaide); and holding general and annual general meetings. Readers can catch up on the NWC activities on the website (www.nwc.org.au)

General & Annual General Meetings

At the Council's 18th General Meeting held on 28 August it was good to have the Deputy Director General and Director, Parks and Wildlife Group, Sally Barnes attend the meeting to discuss topical issues and to respond to questions. Dr Daniel Van Dyk, Project Officer, Major Programs Unit, Protected Areas Policy & Programs Branch also attended. Sally acknowledged the work done by volunteer wildlife rehabilitators and the important role they play in raising public awareness of wildlife.

Topics she discussed included the restructuring of the Parks & Wildlife Group from 18 to 14 regions; the findings of the Victorian Royal Commission on Bushfires; plans for sustainable tourism in National Parks; the review of koala care in NSW; and the draft policies for the Rehabilitation of Protected Fauna and the Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna.

The RTA also attended the General Meeting with Kevin Roberts, Senior Environmental Specialist and Josie Stoke, Environmental Officer, Biodiversity, Environment Branch briefing the NWC on their work being undertaken to promote the need to protect the environment during road construction and maintenance. Other topics discussed included road signage, the possibility of a common NSW telephone helpline and the need to develop better linkages between the various authorities that have responsibilities for our roads.

Both DECCW and the RTA are keen to develop a memorandum of understanding with the NWC.

The 5th AGM took place on 29 August at The Centre in Sydney. 12 groups and IGLs were represented. Whilst no nominations were received prior to the meeting, a committee was formed as follows:

Chair	Audrey Koosmen NATF
Vice Chair	Stan Wood WIRES
Secretary	Brian Chetwynd NTWC
Treasurer	Julia McConnell IGL
Media	Shirley Lack NARG

There are also some non-executive positions:

Revenue	Vacant
Minute Sec	Lorraine Vass FOK
Webmaster	Greg Tarlinton WILDCARE
Insurance	Shirley Lack NARG
Nature Con. Council NSW	Lorraine Vass FOK
Newsletter	Philip Machin NARG
Education	Vacant

A big 'thank you' to the NWC members who have taken on a committee role this year and to those members who carried the load last year.

Next NWC Meeting

The November 2010 General Meeting has been cancelled. The next meeting will be held in Sydney in February 2011 (date TBA)

NWC Funding Update

As reported in the May Newsletter, both DECCW and the RTA have been able to continue their support of the NWC.

DECCW has provided the first of a 3-year funding round of \$25,000 pa. This covers the public liability personal risk and directors' insurance for NWC members and represents a considerable saving. This is a cost that we can expect to rise over time and it is hoped DECCW will continue their support.

This year we also received the last of a 3-year funding round from the RTA of \$20,000. The RTA is keen to support the NWC and appreciates the work done by wildlife rehabbers in attending incidents on the roads. The RTA funds are used to cover NWC operational costs, including postage, stationery, printing, travel and accommodation. These funds mean NWC members can be reimbursed to encourage them to attend the four NWC annual meetings, ad hoc seminars and

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conferences. The NWC has applied to the RTA to continue this funding for a further 3 years.

As has been pointed out in previous newsletters, the voluntary support given to the NSW Government runs into tens of millions of dollars per year and it is good that DECCW and the RTA are able to support our volunteers.

Kangaroos & Us

Recently the NWC applied to be a member of the NSW Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel, but the nomination was not successful. In preparation for the nomination the NWC was able to form a position on the NSW kangaroo management issue.

Kangaroos, like so many other common animals, come in for a tough time in NSW and one wonders whether the commercial and non-commercial 'harvesting' of animals is necessary and whether the impact on the species has been fully considered. In many local areas kangaroos seem to have been largely eradicated.

The NWC is concerned with the level of compliance in policing the killing of kangaroos; the accuracy of kangaroo surveys on which quotas are based; and the manner in which commercial or non-commercial licences to cull are issued.

Flying Foxes

The Royal Botanic Gardens Trust (RBG) received permission from the Federal Government to start the process to relocate flying foxes from the Sydney Botanic Gardens. However this process has been delayed until next year. The whole rationale for dispersing the flying foxes is problematic and Ilona Roberts (TVWC) continues to 'maintain the rage' on behalf of the NWC.

The flying foxes are a threatened species. The impact on this colony and where the animals will end up is unknown. Dispersal will create many injured animals and a number of deaths. Unfortunately the unnecessary activities of the RBG are starting to be repeated elsewhere in NSW e.g. in the Maclean district, and there is a need for us to remain vigilant and rebut these proposals as they arise.

NCC Annual Conference

Lorraine Vass represented the NWC at the Nature Conservation Council of NSW's (NCC) 2010 Annual Conference over the weekend of 30 and 31 October.

NCC is the peak body for nearly 100 of the State's environmental organisations. Its status, acknowledged by membership of well over 150 influential committees, including the Australian Committee for IUCN; the Environmental Trust Board; the Natural Resources

Advisory Council to the NSW Flying Fox Consultative Committee; the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council; National Parks Regional Advisory Committees; and Bushfire Management Committees.

This was the 4th Annual Conference attended by the NWC and we presented four motions. These were well received, triggering supportive discussion and passed with just minor amendments.

The motions addressed the cessation of licences to cull flying foxes; halting the decline in koala populations; opposing the sale of native reptiles in pet shops; and the need to amend the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to treat cats and their owners in the same way as dogs and their owners. The cats' issue resonated most strongly with the 70 or so delegates and observers present.

Snippets

- The NWC is keen to talk to the Department of Industries and Investment (and other Government departments) to work through an improved arrangement for major incident response, including bush fire recovery.
- The NWC continues to discuss the merit of having a common state-wide wildlife rehabilitation database and we are thinking through how this might be done.
- The NWC is still opposing the proposal to sell reptiles through pet shops and has now gained the support of the NCC and its members.
- A steering group comprised of State and Territories representatives is being formed to investigate the need for and viability of a national wildlife rehabilitation body.

Day/Night Cameras

Day/night cameras are relatively cheap and can be a useful addition to your equipment in seeing what is or isn't happening when you are elsewhere.



Please distribute this newsletter widely. Forward comments and contributions for the next newsletter to Philip Machin - machin4@bigpond.com.