



# NSW Wildlife Council Inc.

Achieving optimal outcomes for Australian wildlife

## SECRETARY'S SUMMARY REPORT FROM GENERAL MEETING NO. 44 – 23-5-2017

Welcome by Chair, Audrey Koosmen to the 14 Reps and 4 Alternates present. It was disappointing that only 14 groups were represented at the meeting.

**Guest Speaker, Beth Mott from BirdLife Australia** shared a fascinating Powerpoint presentation which detailed the Birds in Backyards/BirdLife Australia and the Threatened Bird Network project, mostly volunteer-driven on mapping and detailing Powerful Owls in the Sydney Basin. The project aims are to provide greater understanding of the ecology of urban Powerful Owls, and to engage the public in conservation through education, training and data collection. *More information on the project can be seen at [www.birdlife.org.au](http://www.birdlife.org.au)*

Ron Haering, Project Officer Biodiversity and Wildlife Team, National Parks and Wildlife Service provided an update on the **Koala Strategy** announcement following the February stakeholder workshops. Forthcoming activities are the genetic sampling workshop to be held at the Australian Museum on 24-5-17 and in June there will be a stakeholder workshop in Lismore with the aim of future implementation of triage and first aid procedures and to discuss future Code of Practice needs. Participants are being organised at present through liaison with key people to understand current practices, sharing of resources and ultimately improving what meets best practice.

**Review of the wildlife rehabilitation sector** document is currently under compilation. The Veterinary sector survey has been completed with 150 Vet and vet nurse respondents. It is hoped the report will be completed by the end of June and it may need to go through the review process prior to publication and dissemination. The content of the report will include, profile of the sector, Challenges, Vets, Organisations, Evaluation of governance, training, the surveys and recommendations for improvement. Thanks given to Ron.

**Licensing.** Questions were asked about licensing from 1-7-2017 and members present were advised of the email sent to stakeholders on the morning of the meeting (23-5-2017) from Robert Oliver, NPWS as follows

*The public exhibition period for proposed changes to wildlife licence classes and proposed Biodiversity Conservation Act (BC Act) codes of practice has been deferred until later in 2017. Updated advice will be issued when new timeframes have been confirmed.*

*Existing licence classes and conditions will remain in place from the commencement of the BC Act on 25 August 2017. They will be retained until the proposed changes and codes are exhibited and then approved.*

*From 25 August 2017, licence application forms and licence certificates will be updated to refer to BC Act. Licence applications already lodged before 25 August, but not yet issued, will be treated as if they were lodged under the BC Act. As previously advised, all existing licences will remain in effect until they expire.*

*NPWS will continue to consult relevant stakeholders on proposed changes to licence classes, and the contents of the public register of BC Act wildlife licences.*

*The draft Biodiversity Conservation Regulation has been released for public exhibition until the 21 June 2017. You can access a copy <https://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/> If you have any questions or concerns about the draft Regulation, please feel free to contact us on [wildlife.reforms@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wildlife.reforms@environment.nsw.gov.au).*

**Minutes of the February General Meeting** were confirmed and Business Arising of importance to member groups includes;

Cruelty database will be ready for testing soon.

Other items had their own Agenda topic – see later in this summary report

**Chair Report** was emailed to the group email on 22-5-2017

**Treasurer's Report** provided separately to group.

**Association Liability Insurance including Director's and Officer's insurance** – the meeting voted that NWC continues to arrange this insurance cover for all groups.

**Media Officer Report** – Media Officer, Peter Graham, asks all groups to provide stories and photographs suitable for general media, and social media platforms with the aim of lifting the NWC profile to the public and member group volunteers. [peter-graham@bigpond.com](mailto:peter-graham@bigpond.com)

**Codes of Practice update:**

Macropod Code is awaiting independent review.

Next Codes of Practice: NPWS has indicated it wishes that the Koala Code is reviewed following which a Reptile COP should be developed.

All COPs will be formulated/reviewed in conjunction with NWC and WIRES under the facilitation of Shona Lorigan.

It was commented that it was abysmal that there has been little recognition in the existing codes of the work of S. Lorigan and NWC.

**Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016:**

Robert Oliver outlined some of the processes regarding the Stakeholder consultations with Animal Keeper Groups and the welfare and rehabilitation sector – bird groups, reptile groups, frogs and farming interests. There are issues with abandoned wildlife “pets” and others held under separate licences, including those seized by police and other agencies. Further consultations are needed to manage this process but there has been a stop placed by management.

Robert advises we are back to a holding pattern waiting for clarification from OEH about a new time frame – possible until after the Act commences. The meeting was assured there will be further opportunities to respond to any proposals.

Round table meetings will be convened for surrendered/seized wildlife/pets. Concern expressed that NWC must be involved in Catch and Release consultations. RO agreed that NWC will be involved. Concern expressed about conflicts between people who hold multiples of Rehab, catch and release and animal keeper licences. RO advises at this stage there is no limit to the number of different licence categories an applicant can hold.

The meeting Minutes will include a more detailed summary report of update by R. Oliver and other points raised.

**Stakeholder Meeting Report Animal Keepers– A. Koosmen and S. Lorigan**

The first Animal Keeper meeting wanted the licensing system to stay then by the second Animal Keeper stakeholder meeting the bird and reptile people came back wanting the exempt lists to be expanded to include more species that could be kept as pets. They formed stakeholder groups with no representation from welfare or rehab groups. NPWS encouraged all rehab groups to put in submissions – this process has now been delayed so it is important NWC does not lose the opportunity to comment. There seems to be no real understanding or acknowledgment that deregulation will make the problems we face even bigger. Focus on “taking from the wild” – this was not perceived as a problem – dumping back to the wild, hybridisation, not acknowledged. 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting showed schisms between welfare and Animal Keepers. SL suggests a meeting with RSPCA and WIRES to show a united front.

It is important that groups provide data they may have on abandoned/surrendered fauna.

Agreed Action: NWC ask OEH to include on Data Sheet for Rehabilitators an encounter code “**Surrendered/Seized Fauna**”

**Wildlife Rehabilitation Organisations' role in retention of seized animals – R. Woodman** documentation previously sent with Agenda of Meeting.

Outcome of discussions was this Proposal: R. Woodman That the NWC write to OEH to identify that there is an issue that a number of wildlife groups have in regards to seized animals and the cost of maintaining an appropriate welfare environment until the animals' fate is decided. The draft proposal that one NWC group has put together outlines the Policy Position on this matter that the NWC is currently considering. The NWC is seeking comment from OEH on this Draft Policy from one of the member groups in order to assist future consideration of the policy by NWC. Seconded C. Northwood **Carried.**

### **Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants 2017-18**

After much discussion it was agreed that we tell members we have increased the Grant amount to \$10000 and individual grant applications can be to a maximum amount of \$2000. Secretary to send revised grant guidelines to committee for approval.

### **AWRC (Australian Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference) 2018 – request for sponsorship.**

The meeting discussed many different sponsorship options without resolution and it was agreed by Proposal: J. Mesilane That NWC writes to the AWRC 2018 organising committee seeking their list of costed sponsorship opportunities that are available. Seconded: S. Lack – Carried (There was one abstention, and one vote against. R.Woodman asked that his dissenting vote to be recorded.)

**Sharing of Group Resources.** It was acknowledged that many groups have done a lot of good work on various resources/documentation whether they cover governance, information, data retention, education/training, fundraising, and administration procedures or other matters. Some groups are struggling to update resources to the level that might be required for any future licence or accreditation process.

Reps need to go back to their groups and discuss what governance and administrative documents they are willing to share with other groups that do not have or need to improve their governance and administrative documents. It is envisaged the NWC Website could provide a restricted-access library of resources. It was suggested some groups might consider open-licensing their documentation (and were reminded that the author's permission is required).

In **General Business** members were advised that NWC provided \$500 each to assist the organisation of the Wombat Conference and the Koala Conference.

Port Stephens Koalas announced Port Stephen Council's allocation of \$2.8 million for a Koala Hospital and tourism facility.

**Conclusion:** I trust this summary report will assist Representatives and Alternate members report back to their groups in a timely way. When the Minutes have been finalised and approved by management they will be distributed.

**Meredith Ryan**

Hon. Secretary | NSW Wildlife Council