

# MINUTES V1 of the NSW Wildlife Council General Meeting No. 55 –held by Zoom - Wednesday 23 September 2020 2to4 pm

2pm – 2-05pm

Opening by Chair: A. Koosmen – welcome to new members present.

Meeting via Zoom Chair, Audrey Koosmen; Facilitated by Vice-Chair, Suzy Nethercott-Watson

<b><u>Present- 22: Name</u></b>	<b><u>Group</u></b>
Meredith Ryan	FAWNA (NSW) Inc
Ros Irwin	Friends of the Koala
Audrey Koosmen	Hunter Wildlife Rescue-NATF
Brendan Diacono	LAOKO
Shirley Lack	NARG
Sandy Norris	NRWC
Jacquie Maisey	NTWC
Julia Rose	NTWC-Alt
Leesa Pratt	ORRCA
Ashley Ryan	ORRCA-Alt
Rodney Sanderson	SONA-Alt
Shane & Lisa Crowhurst	Sunraysia Wildlife Carers
Sonja Elwood	Sydney Wildlife
Chris Thompson	Sydney Wildlife-Alt
Garry Gnapp	Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers-Alt
Suzy Nethercott-Watson	Wildcare Queanbeyan
Joanne Kelly	Wildlife Aid
Linda Stoev	Wildlife Carers Network Central West
Danielle Seach	Wildlife In Need of Care
Janine Davies	Wildlife Rescue South Coast
Jenny Packwood	Wildlife Rescue South Coast-Alt
<b>Apology</b>	
Lisa Hood	Australian Seabird Rescue
<b>Visitors</b>	
Vanessa Barratt	<u>Foundation for National Parks &amp; Wildlife</u>
Peter Stathis	<u>National Parks &amp; Wildlife</u>
Peta Norris	<u>National Parks &amp; Wildlife</u>
Tim Johnson	<u>National Parks &amp; Wildlife</u>

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Intro by Chair and welcome to Rodney, Janine, Lisa and Shane

Acknowledgment of the Late Richard “Woody” Woodman. Woody was a wonderful member and loyal to NWC and South Coast Wildlife Rescue, he made great contributions to NWC, he sparked some vigorous debate around the table. He and his wife Kerstin did a wonderful job for the rehabilitation sector. The NWC table will not be the same without him. He was very helpful in many things. His passion and commitment to wildlife was beyond words. We pay our respects to him today.

2.05pm – 2.10pm

Introduction including how this meeting will operate on line – SNW.

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2.10pm – 2.35pm

Guest: Peter Stathis NPWS

Welcome to Peter from Chair. Always welcome to our meetings. Peter echoed the tribute to Richard Woodman saying another Wildlife hero has gone.

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- Progress with Wildlife Rehab Sector Strategy – now incorporates bushfire work – there are some strategic initiatives we want to work with directly with the NWC and WIRES such as improving conflict management.
- *The strategy has never been closer to sign off. Final changes were made this morning to the draft document – changes sought are largely around the work that Peta’s and Tim’s presentation will cover. Information and actions that arise from Bush Fire Royal Commission and the Koala Upper House Inquiry. Hoping the next time we are talking there will be a strategy in front of us. There are a number of initiatives we want to work with NWC, including such things as conflict management; this was a key recommendation of the biodiversity review panel’s report. It features in the strategy. Hope to work with you to come up with a good set of renewed conflict management resources. When we land the Strategy we will review the overall Rehabilitation Policy. NPWS model is now completely different. My team now plays a much more involved role than the Areas do. There will be tweaks when the Strategy is released. Our recent updating of the policy was just to update departmental details and a few small things but I recognise this caused consternation because we didn’t tell you we were updating the policy – my apologies. Draft Strategy is on the Web. Some aspects have already been worked on; other aspects need to be approved first-*
- *Accreditation will be designed in a sympathetic way with no surprises. We will be working proactively with you and are looking to make it as easy as possible. It will be a slow transition and we will be likely to commence work with all the groups around February and talking how the process will work. The process might take some time – could even be to December 2021. No one will lose their authority and whatever time it takes – that is the time it takes. We don’t want to overburden you with too much administration.*
- Will commence a more formal policy review once the strategy is signed off
- *Accreditation if the first dot point is approved would be implemented from end June 2021. We will likely be working with groups to commence the transition process from February 2021. Licences are likely to be extended again to accommodate the process. However, all groups will have access to the accreditation requirements once the strategy is approved.*
- Wildlife Heroes grants - \$500K plus vaccine link to our strategy – important strategic partner we want to support to deliver the strategy

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- *FPN strategic partner to take this program forwards. We can't expect this bucket of money to continue and we hope the Foundation will be able to continue to support you in ways the department can't. We want programs to be fully subscribed and we want to embrace all strategic partnerships.*
- *Annual report and dashboard: Date from 2017 to 2020 – we are in the process of 3 Annual Reports that showcase the sector. People need to better understand and respect the sector. Data is important for this – data is currently being cleaned up and standardised. Aggregation of what the sector does per annum. We are trying to get this through the Annual Reporting. Hope to get to an online dashboard to present data. We hope to be able to show it to you at the next meeting and hoping to provide an annual Dashboard to demonstrate the achievements and the pressures. It becomes really important data for conservation planning – Bionet – Atlas of Living Australia – Seed Portal – 3 key datasets that are used by scientists and planners day to day.*
- *Governance training  
Social Media and the Law; Member disputes and conflict on the committee; Privacy and Data Law; Safety Risk and Insurance; Media Training.  
Please think who is best in your group so the investment in training is going to be used best. Key positions change so we have to keep up this type of training. It is important that this training is ongoing.*
- *Hannah Ryan has left – recruitment is underway. Hannah was fabulous in the team. She and Shona came from the sector and that is one of the key reasons why they are so good. We acknowledge Hannah's incredible work and communication with the sector. AK would like to acknowledge Hannah's commitment. I had the privilege of working with her on several projects. I was very sad to see her go and it is a shame to lose her intelligence and commitment and we will miss her.*
- *Who is using our new Video? We hope it being played at volunteer induction meetings We encourage use of the video in induction training. Groups need to contact Shona Lorigan to be able to get access to download the video*
- *Potential extension to Koala Strategy*
- *Likely to be an extension to the Koala Strategy. This was the vehicle to continue the intensive work we have been doing with the sector. We have been asked to rebid to do this work. The processes are fraught and we can't predict what opportunities might come. We will be bidding to extend the current work. All to have a stronger cohesive partnership and network. Ambition about doubling the number of koalas by 2050 – a big call – not happening in my team – but expert groups are coming together to come to government with advice about a new strategy. Proposals are likely to include captive breeding and translocations. The latter is a new possibility for engagement with government and the sector; a potential point of strategic engagement with the rehab sector.*

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- Updating boundary maps based on postcodes. They are all on the web. There was no rhyme or reason in the way things were done and Ron has been working with mapping people based on post-codes. Please look at the maps and advise any areas of conflict. The link and instructions follow:
- <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/rehabilitating-native-animals/wildlife-rehabilitation-licences#rehab>
- Go to the Heading “**Licensed wildlife rehabilitation groups list**” and click on the down arrow on the right. Group detail will appear and you click on the link to the map.

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## Q&A

Sonja Elwood, SW and Linda Stoev, WCNCW – are the group boundary maps on the Web? PS yes – Link will be provided and included in Minutes. (see above)

SE, Sydney Wildlife – Thanks for Bionet – in her own LGA it has added 30K animals to the records which is greatly helping consultations with developers. PS – super keen to show you the dashboard – LGA cut – trend data, drill it down to cause – great tool for advocacy with local government.

Chris Thompson, Sydney Wildlife – Peter has anything happened yet about the unified peak body? PS That will come out with the strategy – once it is out we can have further communication about it. We are aware of some of the challenges

- 1) unified peak body or
- 2) advisory body established by the Minister are still options in the Strategy. There has been a lot of good work to see what possibility there is to mend bridges. It is not easy. We have to be pragmatic and realistic and it has to be something we all want and is achievable.

On behalf of the NWC cohort the Chair expressed thanks to Peter for his valuable update and gave assurances that input would continue to be a valuable part of NWC Group meetings.

2.40pm- 2.55pm

**Guest: Vanessa Barratt, Wildlife Heroes Project Manager, Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife** *Intro: Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife is a national charity working with National Parks across Australia. Main role is buying land to become national parks. We have 3 years of funding to run projects. Commonwealth gave Foundation money to expand to become a national program*

Vaccination grant round \$56400 for vaccinations for 7 groups and two volunteering wildlife hospitals.

**Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services Inc**

**F.A.W.N.A. (NSW) Inc.**

**Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers**

**Wildcare Queanbeyan**

**Native Animal Trust Fund Inc (Hunter Wildlife Rescue)**

**Wildlife Animal Rescue and Care Society Inc**

**Wildlife Aid**

**Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital**

**Southern Cross Wildlife Care**

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## **Current Durable Asset grant round**

*First of its kind. Feedback from across Australia confirms that this is a first to improve assets for the rehabilitation sector. \$500K funding from the Federal Government and \$300K from NSW. Applications close on Friday 25/9/20. It is not too late to get an application in. Clementine, my colleague, will advise applicants on required documentation.*

## **Caring for the Carers Update**

*Working with Two Green Threads producing resources for carers all over Australia. Demonstrated benefit of carers sharing and collaborating all over Australia. Great cross sharing.*

**Wildlife friendly vets** – *working with them to find ways to work better with wildlife and wildlife carers. We need PR to the public about the amount of time and money vets put in. We want to help them get the credit that they are due. There is a big campaign coming up with a small financial incentive to help them. We would like to be able to increase the subsidies.*

**Wildlife Heroes Noticeboard** *is a Facebook page started a few weeks ago. It is very much a good news noticeboard. At the top level it aims to show what grants, help, training, and resources are available.*

*What do the public think about wildlife carers? We'd like to focus on some research I have been doing for my Masters through a public survey about interest in wildlife rehabilitation work, how much people are willing to donate or support, perceptions of the work rehabilitators do. There are some exciting and encouraging results. Carers don't tend to get much feedback. To the question How important do you think wildlife rescue services are in Australia? 77% of respondents gave 10/10 – the highest possible score. Only 5% gave a score less than 8/10. I was shocked by this and that tells us we have the opportunity to tap into this more. People want to support, help and get involved and we need to work out how that might best be achieved. There is lots of amazing data I would like to share. I can do that with individual groups if you contact me direct.*

*Chair offers particular thanks to the Foundation to Vanessa and Clementine. Partnerships with the fund have been a real boost to the sector. It is overwhelming and outstanding the support that is being given, just sad that it took extremes of drought and bushfires to do it – it is history making – thank you very much to the Foundation on behalf of all rehabilitation groups.*

## **Q&A**

*Jacque Maisey – NTWC – We are extremely happy to be able to vaccinate people. This is the first time after years and years of asking.*

*Brendan Diacono – LAOKO – with the large Durable Assets grants – applications require WHS Policy and Incident Reports, and Risk Assessments. VB There are links to documentation on the application form. WH&S is one of the training opportunity subjects.*

*SNW – Any groups that have a policy would they circulate via the Secretary.*

*VB: Risk Assessment – if you receive the grant you will receive the Risk Assessment documentation.*

*BD Wildlife Friendly Vets scheme – how can we get our favourite vet engaged in that program?. VB We haven't worked out the system yet. We would love groups' ideas about how that might work.*

*SE – Sydney Wildlife – at the last AWRC the suggestion to offer tax relief or vets who were providing services for wildlife was tabled. Is this something that the Foundation might engage with the Tax Department? VB Exploring options including incentives and help for vets through the Foundation.*

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Chair Audrey offered thanks again to Vanessa for her time today.

2.55pm-3pm

Bio Break

3.00-3.15

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**Guests: Peta Norris and Tim Johnson – NPWS Bushfire relief for wildlife program**

## **Intro Audrey Koosmen**

The Powerpoint of the presentation will be included with the Minutes. Peta Norris and Tim Johnson are picking up the work commenced by NPWS colleagues Susan Crocetti, Gina Hart and Ron Haering to lead the \$1 million bushfire relief for wildlife program funded through the NSW Environmental Trust. The program is across three streams:

- direct support for wildlife rehabilitators through \$500,000 of grants administered through the Wildlife Heroes program in partnership with the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife;
- improving coordination and capability for wildlife response in bushfires, and;
- improving access to veterinary services for wildlife in emergencies.

The full presentation in a Webinar on Friday 25 September 2020 has been advertised to the Group

Interested in Feedback. 10.00 Friday 25 Webinar which will be live and recorded. We will be sharing a link to a nomination form to share with working groups. Nominations until 9 October.

*Brendan Diacono, LAOKO. How have discussions gone with RFS integrating wildlife into bushfire response? PN Community spoke very clearly and whole of government is listening. Wildlife response in bushfire operations is being engaged by government.*

AK thanks for presentation. SNW this is start of a long relationship with Peta and Tim and NWC will play a role to further this good work.

The Chair thanked Peter Stathis, Vanessa Barratt, Peta Norris and Tim Johnson for sharing their work with the Council.

3.15pm - 3.30pm

**NWC reflection** from Vanessa's information and Peta's information, drawing out any actions or implications for groups that Reps may want to action or the NWC may want to pick up on collectively.

*Wildlife emergency/crisis preparedness and response (plans, info sharing, lessons learnt, supporting each other, groups to reach out to for additional support), also*

*The NWCs role in future emergencies, how we can all network together as Reps to support positive outcomes for wildlife and our rescuers/carers*

Chair: All groups really need to think what they are going to do to advance Bushfire and Emergency Management (EM) frameworks. One of the projects in the Council is Emergency Management. I do speak regularly with Wires and EM is one of those topics. We are going to have a meeting with Wires with 3 WIRES staff and the NWC EM Team. We will communicate what goes on. We need to all work together towards a positive mutual aim to be ready to respond to all Emergency situations.

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There is a lot of internal liaison already between groups. Most groups should have their Emergency Management Plan but this is a long process. AK first step is Bush Fire Awareness. You need a Plan and Leadership. Groups should be able to work together – e.g. FAWNA. works very closely with the Koala Hospital – groups should be combining and working together.

Groups that have Emergency Plans already should share them with other groups. Anyone with documentation should share their Emergency Management Plan. RI FOK would like to receive material directly to help guide her group. AK Plan needs to be simple. HWR has a very simple plan – people need to understand the chain of command and become a supporting Agency with DPI – but first groups need their tailored Emergency Plan, people must be trained and then one can become a supporting Agency.

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- *Action: Find information that will help other groups rather than needing to start a Plan from scratch.*

3.30pm – 3.35pm

## Annual General Meeting and Elections – method and timing

Chair: How do we go forward? The options seem to be:

- defer the Annual General meeting and Elections until COVID-19 settles down
- progress towards holding an electronic meeting with electronic or pre-election nominations and ballot electronically

A round robin poll showed 60% suggesting a 3-6 months deferment; some opted for 12 months and some were undecided, depending on update to the state-wide situation.

Wildlife Rescue South Coast held a successful AGM and Election on the Zoom platform – with pre-nomination procedures for the 9 positions. There were only enough nominations to fill positions but allowance was made for the situation should more nominations be received than positions to fill. This was a Survey Monkey 4 day poll would be held culminating at the AGM.

We are waiting for an extension of time from NSW Fair Trading on the ability to meet electronically currently valid until 26/9/2020.

**Propose** That NWC defers its Annual General Meeting for a period of 6 months and revisit the situation depending on circumstances. SNW – Seconded AK - Carried

3.35pm – 3.40pm

**Shirley Lack Treasurer NWC:** Financial Report attached to Minutes.

NSW Wildlife Council Public Fund structure, Public Fund Management committee now comprises Suzy Nethercott-Watson, Meredith Ryan, Andrew Ryan LLB, Shirley Lack.

NWC Grant round completed and awaiting progress reports. Total value of grants \$93541.

\$63800 Working account;  
\$98000 in Public Fund.

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Committee decided not to distribute all the funds because there might be other opportunities and needs coming up for projects. All groups but 1 took up the \$3000 contribution from the Bushfire and Emergency Fund. Some IGLs also took up the \$1000 contribution.

3.40pm – 3.50pm

## **Strategic Planning – what, when?**

To include a touch-base on the previously agreed NWC four identified Areas of Focus and whether there has been any progress on these in light of the year that it has been.

### **The four Areas of Focus and those volunteers who had offered to progress as a sub team include:**

- Plastics/Waste Impact of Wildlife and Habitat – Team Leader Leesa Pratt  
*No further actions at this time*
- Emergency Management and Wildlife – Audrey Koosmen, Leesa Pratt, Ros Irwin and Suzy Nethercott-Watson – *Refer previous discussions.*
- Land Development and Wildlife Management – Ros Irwin and Suzy Nethercott-Watson  
*no further actions at this stage*
- Droughts and Wildlife – not assigned

3.50-3.55

## **General business**

WIRES has advised (15-9-20) it is replacing all existing road signs with the WIRES Call Centre Number. No new signage is planned.

3.55pm – 4pm

Wrap up and agreement we should go forward with Zoom meetings. Appreciation extended to Suzy for organising the meeting today.

Close 4pm

End.

*Minutes proposed, seconded and passed as a true and correct copy at Zoom Meeting held on 24 April 2021.*

*Secretary, M. Ryan  
24 April 2021*