

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, 21 March 2019

Uniting Church Hall, Scrivener St, O'Connor

1.0 Welcome and apologies

Committee member Kevin McCue welcomed members and guests to the meeting. On his invitation guest Deane Freeman gave the acknowledgment of the traditional Ngunnawal custodianship of the land. Approximately 40 members and guests were present, with apologies received from Esther Gallant, Rod Griffiths, Jacqui Cole, David Large, Chris Watson, Judy and Dave Kelly.

2.0 Confirmation of the minutes of the 21 February 2019 meeting

The minutes are available online through the web link provided in the latest *Burning Issues* and a printed copy could be perused before the meeting. They were approved as written. There were no matters arising.

3.0 NPA activities

Kevin reported on the following issues:

- Kevin congratulated Brian Slee and the rest of the team (Adrienne Nicholson and Ed Highley) on a very readable and aesthetically pleasing edition. The meeting thanked the working group with applause.
- The Publicity Subcommittee has completed the design of the new NPA brochure copies of which have been delivered to the Namadgi Visitor Centre and the Conservation Council display areas. Convener Allan Sharp asked for help in getting them displayed at other suitable venues.
- The 60th Anniversary Subcommittee led by Cynthia Burton has organised the keynote speaker (Brett McNamara) and the 2 founders of Intrepid Landcare who are very successful in recruiting young land carers throughout Australia as additional speakers for the Members' Forum on 6 April.
- A group of NPA members turned up at Garema Place in support of the amazing school children's strike on Friday March 15.
- The Conservation Council's new Executive Director, Helen Oakey, started in the position early this week. We wish her well and look forward to working with her.

Cynthia reported on Reclaim Kosci activities:

- NSW petition campaign: Currently we have over 10,000 signatures that will be presented to the NSW Government and force heritage protection of feral horses to be debated in the NSW Parliament. Adrienne Nicholson noted there is a copy of the petition at this meeting, and invited those present to sign it.
- Letterboxing in the lead-up to the NSW election on 23 March: the flyer being distributed is based on information from the main parties in response to a questionnaire. The flyer will also be handed out at polling booths.
- The Indigenous Water Healing Ceremony at the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee River in KNP on 3 March was well attended, including by various media personnel. The resulting video of the event has been viewed more than 285,000 times!

John Brickhill gave an update on the Rosenberg's Goanna project: altogether 35 goanna have been caught and tagged this year, including 2 females; in mid-April the GPS packs will be taken off again; one of the cameras recorded a white dingo with a black face.

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.

4.0 Other business

Graham Scully reported on his recent Tasmanian trip where he and Helen were shown Bob Brown's property. Bob himself gave them a tour of his property and house where he is writing his next book titled *Optimism and Defiance*. Graham and Helen were very impressed with Bob's friendliness and hospitality. Bob is the guest speaker at this year's World Environment Day dinner organised by the Conservation Council.

5.0 Presentation

Kevin introduced the ACT Government speakers who gave separate presentations on different aspects of the fire management planning process in the ACT: Joe Murphy on the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP); Tony Scherl on the Regional Fire Management Plan (RFMP); Neil Cooper on the Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP); Margaret Kitchin elaborated on how ecological information feeds into these plans; and Deane Freeman informed us about first experiences with Aboriginal cultural burns in the ACT.

These presentations are part of the public consultation process on the new 10-year SBMP that will be published in September 2019. There will be four community forums in the first two weeks of April. Members of the public can also make comments through the website www.yoursay.act.gov.au/bushfire-management-plan when it is put out for consultation.

The effects of climate change have already necessitated an extension of the fire season. In land-use planning in the ACT, zoning according to fire risk has been introduced; new houses and major extensions to existing houses have to meet conditions according to bushfire attack level (BAL) values. *Phoenix* is the software used to model bushfire risk; and a new concept of 'residual risk' after fuel treatments going from no treatment to prescribed burning, slashing and clearing has been developed.

Fire also incurs an ecological risk: the tolerable fire interval is a measure of the interval between fires to minimise loss of species for each vegetation community. Fire management of ecological assets includes fire exclusion and the aim of fuel-reduction burns is to produce a mosaic of smaller burnt areas across the landscape.

The presentation was followed by a stimulating question and answer session at the 9.50 pm conclusion of which the presenters were thanked by Kevin.

Everyone was invited to join in a light supper.

President:

Date: