



National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.

conservation education protection

Annual Report 2023 – 24

This year saw several significant achievements. Foremost was an overhaul of our administrative arrangements and office systems, a new website and walks booking system, successful walks and work party programs, and continued vigorous advocacy.

Committee

The committee met monthly, from February to November. In May we welcomed a new member to the committee, former Manager Tidbinbilla John McRae, who had recently retired as. John also took on the important role of Environment Subcommittee convenor and has already coordinated two submissions to the ACT Government.

The committee oversaw the update of the membership database to a safer and more secure system to protect members' details. We appreciated members' patience, support and feedback while we rolled out the database in time for the 2024 – 25 membership renewals.

Membership fees

At a general meeting in May, members voted unanimously to amend our constitution to increase membership fees over 2 years, and for membership to be effective for 12 months from the date of payment of membership fees. The last significant increase in membership fees was in 2000. Increasing insurance and printing costs for the *Bulletin* alone made an increase necessary.

Walks



Pryors Hut. Photo by Jan Gatenby

Our walks program continued to return to strength, with 23 members leading walks, from more challenging excursions to leisurely 'urban' strolls. Eighty of the 100 scheduled walks went ahead after cancellations due to bad weather and other circumstances, with an average of eight participants on each walk. A popular addition was mountain bike rides on approved tracks in parks and reserves, and our snowshoe days were oversubscribed again.

Some of our urban walks, such as tours of the ANU sculptures and visits to the native gardens at Parliament House, attracted

prospective members who found out about the events through our social media, and many subsequently joined. My thanks to Mike Bremers and Brian Slee for compiling the annual walks report.

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Work parties



Fence removal. Photo by Brian Slee

We had 26 'regulars' for work parties. Of the 13 work parties held, seven were in Namadgi. Tasks varied, from woody weed control around Brayshaws Hut and Honeysuckle Creek to fence and barbed wire removal around Glendale and the Orroral Homestead and former space tracking station site.

We conducted five work parties in Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) reserves: two to control pines in the Bullen Range Nature Reserve, two to remove fences in the Stony Creek Nature Reserve and the Murrumbidgee Corridor behind Tuggeranong shopping centre, and one for woody weed control at Moores Hill.

In May, we held a 3-day work party, for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), at Dananbilla Nature Reserve on the NSW central slopes. NPA has participated in 21 work parties at Dananbilla since 2013, in addition to those conducted for PCS.

My thanks to Martin Chalk for this work party report.

Communications and publications

Communication and outreach are crucial in attracting new members and followers. The official launch of our new website by Environment and Land Management Minister Rebecca Vassarotti at the Christmas party in December 2023 was the culmination of months of planning and development. A popular feature of the new site has been an online calendar for booking walks and other events, and a new online membership management system.

The *Bulletin* team of editors Brian Slee, Philip Gatenby, Allan Sharp and Craig Watson, designer Sabine Friedrich, copy editor Ed Highley, and proof-reader Jim Lehane continues to produce a high-quality publication with members providing much of the content and excellent photographs. And my great appreciation to *Burning Issues* editor Marie Santsingh, who has extended our Mailchimp mailouts to other newsletters, including *Goanna News*.

Our social media, particularly Facebook, keeps members and followers up to date with our activities. Social media coordinator Jim Lehane, assisted by Louisa Barnsley, dedicates many hours to regular posting and keeping content topical and varied. We also updated all our display materials, including the marquee and banners.

Meetings

Our monthly meetings had an array of interesting speakers on wide-ranging topics. With the ACT election due in October, Minister Vassarotti and her Labor and Liberal counterparts, Suzanne Orr and Nicole Lawder, were invited to have their say over two successive meetings.

My thanks to Marian Pearson and Jenny Carter for organising suppers, and to those who

helped set up and clean up afterwards.

Advocacy

In September, we presented a paper, 'Management of the Dingo in the ACT: Issues and options', to Minister Vassarotti and recommended that the animals be declared as a 'controlled native species' under the *ACT Nature Conservation Act (2014)*.

We continued to support the campaign to reduce feral horse numbers in Kosciusko National Park (KNP). In September 2023, we made a submission to NPWS on the draft plan to amend the KNP Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan. This was followed by another submission, in October, to the NSW Legislative Council's Animal Welfare Committee Inquiry, into the proposed aerial shooting of brumbies in KNP.

In March, we put our case for ongoing financial support for NPA from the ACT Government. In June, treasurer Jenny Barnes and I were invited to appear before the ACT Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Estimates to discuss our case.

Under new Environment Subcommittee convener John McRae, we made two submissions to the ACT Government: on the *10-year review of the Nature Conservation ACT 2014 and the Nature Conservation Strategy 2013 – 2023* and on the *10-year review of the ACT Water Strategy 2014 – 44*. The content of these submissions was also raised in regular meetings that other committee members and I have with Minister Vassarotti and PCS officers.

As a member of the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC), we contributed to an NPAC submission to the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on the *Draft National Roadmap for protecting and conserving 30% of Australia's land by 2030*.

All these submissions are available on our website.

Namadgi 40th anniversary

Thanks to an ACT Government environment grant, we have been able to plan various activities to support our celebration of Namadgi's 40th anniversary in October, including the special feature in the September issue of the *Bulletin*.

Finally, my fullest appreciation and thanks to our many members who contribute so much to our activities. I hope to see many of you at the Namadgi celebrations in October, and at our Christmas party in December.

*Rosemary Hollow,
NPA ACT President
15 August 2024*