

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, 15 October 2020, 8pm (on Zoom)

**1. Welcome**

President Esther Gallant welcomed members and guests to the meeting and expressed her pleasure that so many people were joining in as guests (in total there were about 50 participants).

Esther paid respects to the traditional custodians of the land and their elders, past and present.

**2. Announcements**

The awards for the winners of NPA's 60th anniversary Young Photographer Competition were presented on Friday 9 October 2020 at the Southern Cross Club Woden. About 200 images were entered in the various categories and the winning entries will be displayed on the screen at the Canberra Museum and Gallery and at a later date also at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. All winners can apply for complimentary NPA membership and receive the quarterly digital *NPA Bulletin* for the rest of this financial year. The next *Bulletin* will give a pictorial report on the winning images.

**3. Presentation by Anthony Sharwood**

***From Snow to Ash: soul searching and survival on the Australian Alps Walking Track***

Esther welcomed Anthony Sharwood, Walkley Award-winning journalist and author of the book *From Snow to Ash*, who in late 2019 set off to do a solo-trek on the iconic 660km long Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) from south to north. Little did he know that he would face snow storms, fire danger, and a dramatic helicopter evacuation before the end. Along the way, Anthony came to realise that nothing would ever be the same - for him or the imperilled Australian Alps.

The former Huffington Post and Channel 10 environment and sports journalist/editor has documented his experience in his recently published book that he hopes will find many readers.

In his presentation about the walk and his book, Anthony talked about the emotions that his walk through Kosciuszko National Park brought to the fore: love, joy, elation, despair, grief and mourning, and he described his book as a 70,000-word love letter to the park. He says, the more emotions one has for the mountains, the more one can feel connected to them. The effects of climate change and the resulting mega-fire as threats to the mountains were emotionally very negative for him on his trek. His favourite mountain is Jagungal which 'changes colour like the famous Uluru'.

Anthony considers Canberra people very lucky to have the mountains so close by, unlike the population in Sydney, his home town. Why did he embark on this trek - because of his desire to experience the mountains and learn to understand them. He only met 3 or 4 other walking parties on his trek, and the sight of 1000s of Macleay's Swallowtails was his most memorable experience of wildlife. One of the questions from the audience was: Did he speak to pro-brumby people on his trek? Apparently not, but he will be writing about the horse damage he experienced and interviewing some of them for that article.

Esther thanked Anthony for his presentation and for responding to the audience's questions and declared the meeting closed at 9:10 pm.

*Next general meeting – Thursday 19 November 2020 (on Zoom).*

Chair: ..... Date: .....