

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT INC.

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, 17 March 2022, 19:30 pm
Uniting Church Hall, Scrivener Street, O'Connor

1. Welcome

President Esther Gallant welcomed members to the first face-to-face meeting for several months. In total there were 27 participants.

Esther acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, learn and work, and paid respects to the First Nations Peoples and their Elders, past, present and emerging.

2. Announcements

Esther gave an overview of NPA activities happening again after Covid restrictions were eased:

- Outings and work parties: running as usual plus some nature walks and special-issue walks (i.e. the save Blewitt's Block walk jointly with the Conservation Council of the ACT and Region).
- Short notice list: weekly reminder of scheduled walks and occasional short notice walks. Contact npaact.org.au to be added to this list.
- Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage was in December and a display of the results is at Namadgi Visitor Centre until 9 April.

Namadgi Issues:

- Rocky Crossing repair (access to Orroral Camp Ground) – NPA ACT has sent a letter to ACT Roads Minister Steel co-signed by the presidents of CBC and BBC expressing our concern. Reply: work to be finished by mid 2022.
- Namadgi Fire Trail network is in appalling condition due to 2 years of flood damage. Esther has discussed needed repairs with Ian Walker (Executive Director of Environment Directorate), Daniel Iglesias (Director of Parks and Conservation) and Brett McNamara (Namadgi Manager).
- In collaboration with Brett, NPA is planning a tour for Members of the Legislative Assembly with portfolios concerned with Environment, Namadgi, Water and Climate Change to view fire trail damage so they will understand the importance and cost of repairs. Seven MLAs from all 3 parties have been invited. Five have accepted while 2 have expressed interest but not yet confirmed participation. Both Walker and Iglesias support the plan and will be on the tour.

Across the border threats to Kosciuszko National Park continue:

- Feral Horses: NSW finally released a plan to remove horses though not enough of them. Now we wait to see it implemented.
- Massive development of tourism infrastructure in the alpine area has been recently proposed.
- Snowy Hydro 2.0 construction has resulted in extensive land clearing and road building and proposes wide-ranging installation of above-ground transmission lines.

Students Global Strike for Climate Justice at ANU on Friday 25 March: Climate change is the most important environmental issue of our time. To show our concern NPA ACT will join Canberra university students on 25 March at ANU. This will be an opportunity for us to support young people standing for their future and to send politicians a clear message demanding climate action. We have a large banner which will be used to show we are there. Esther urged members to get in touch with Allan Sharp who is organising meeting time and place for NPA members.

3. Presentation by Kevin McCue, NPA ACT Life Member:

The Tonga volcano eruption -

Why did it generate a sonic boom around the Earth?

Kevin stood in as speaker at the last minute, rather than have the general meeting cancelled. He talked about a recent eruption in Tonga of the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcano which he and NPA member Bruce Boreham have investigated. Explosive eruptions like this one often generate a vertical column of ash and steam rising above the crater into the upper atmosphere. On a worldwide scale such eruptions are relatively common and Kevin showed slides of several volcanic eruptions he

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has observed over the last few decades. The explosions sometimes generate shock waves that develop into sonic booms over a range of a few kilometres.

What was different about the Tongan volcano on 15 January 2020 was that the shock wave generated in the largest of its several eruptions triggered a sonic boom that travelled all the way around the Earth at the velocity of sound. *The shock waves that rippled through the atmosphere and oceans are unlike anything seen in the modern scientific era* according to *Nature News*.

Kevin and Bruce's literature search indicated that apart from man-made nuclear explosions in the atmosphere, only two volcanic eruptions since 1880 have generated such long-lasting shock waves recorded on observatory barographs. The Tongan explosion was uniquely recorded at citizen-science and Bureau of Meteorology observatories across Australia which the authors used to compute various properties of the shock wave. They then postulated a possible causative mechanism, involving hydrogen gas leaking from the Earth's outer core, ~3000km deep at the base of the long-lived subduction zone where it is created.

This is a similar tectonic setting to the Krakatoa Volcano in Indonesia which famously erupted in 1883, the only other known case where a sonic boom was generated - it travelled several times around the Earth.

They suggested that oceanographic research ships travel along the subduction zone to sample for hydrogen bubbling to the surface, only then could their proposal be validated or dismissed.

After a number of questions from the audience Esther thanked Kevin for his presentation and declared the meeting closed at 8:35 pm.

Esther invited participants to stay on for the fist 'cuppa' after relaxation of the Covid restrictions.

Chair: Date: