

## **FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK INCORPORATED**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Held on Thursday August 25 2016 at**

**Environmental Education Centre, Farnell Avenue, Royal National Park**

**Meeting opened at 4.00 pm**

**Chairperson – John Arney**

#### **Acknowledgment of Country**

John Arney acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which the Royal National Park is situated.

#### **Members present**

John Arney, Ralph Cartwright, Ian Hill, Josie Piper, Peter Donley, Neville Bethe, Bruce Cooper, Peter Kahn, Jo Keohan, George Cotis, Diane Townley, Peter Stitt, Helen Voysey, Julie Gallan and Tom Ledden.

#### **Apologies**

Basil Ellis, Judith Carrick, Rita Taylor, Ann Young , Patsy Nagle, Anne Carrick, Tony Larkin, Mark Da Silva and Eileen Haley.

#### **Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and Special General Meeting**

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 August 2015 as circulated by email were adopted by consensus.

The minutes of the Special General Meeting held on 23 June 2016 as circulated by email were adopted by consensus.

#### **Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting**

There were no matters arising from these minutes.

## **Business dealt with**

### **1 President's Report**

John Arney gave a verbal report on the activities of the organisation throughout the year since the last AGM. There was general discussion of the items he highlighted.

John subsequently provided a written report for circulation which is attached – Attachment 1.

### **2 Treasurer's Report – Ralph Cartwright**

Ralph Cartwright presented financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2016.

Moved Peter Kahn/Ian Hill that the financial statements be adopted.  
Carried.

A copy of the Balance Sheet is attached – Attachment 2.

A copy of the Income and Expenditure Statement is attached – Attachment 3.

Ralph reported that the current balance in the bank accounts is a total of \$12,114.02.

### **3 Charity Status**

The meeting confirmed that the organisation is to retain its status as a charity.

### **4 Election of Committee**

Tom Ledden reported that the following nominations had been received.

President	John Arney
Vice President	Bruce Cooper
Secretary	No nominations



Signed: .....John Arney..... Meeting Chairperson. Date: .....

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## ATTACHMENT 1 President's Report

Friends of the Royal National Park  
Annual General Meeting  
Presidents Report, 2015-2016

It gives me pleasure to report on the events and involvements of the Friends of the Royal National Park (areas) for the year to the 25 August, 2016.

I firstly wish to acknowledge the custodians of the *Friends of Royal* areas the Dharawal People, and on behalf of the members of the Friends of Royal show care for their land, culture, and heritage, and to pay our respects to their elders, past and present.

On 27 Aug., 2015, the following committee members were elected at the AGM:— (The previous Chairman, Ian Hill, having completed his maximum 3 year term in that position, stepped down.) Chair, John Arney; Vice Chair, Bruce Cooper; Secretary, Tom Ledden; Treasurer, Ralph Cartwright; Committee Members:—Jo Keohan, Ian Hill, Neville Bethe, Mark Da Silva and Basil Ellis.

Members have participated in a wide variety of activities throughout the year, including, in summary:—

Weed control, track clearing, track trimming, erosion control, litter collecting, water quality testing, fence repairs, fauna and flora monitoring, grant applications, education, surveys and reporting.

Additionally, members have been active within a number of organisations that have natural, cultural and heritage interests within the Park boundaries.

In chronological order some of the main items for the year were:—

8 Sept., 2015. Bruce and I paid a visit to Wollongong to talk to Mike McKeon, who is in charge of Wollongong Council's Environmental Education programs. The southern section of RNP falls within the Wollongong Local Government Area and 'Council has over many years had a cooperative approach to working with communities to tackle local environmental issues.

The purpose of our visit was to draw on Mike's experiences on what works in the Public domain in relation to education on environmental awareness issues and also to discuss volunteer involvement. We found Mike to be most informative and came away with several ideas that could be used to shape future actions.

13 Sept., 2015. From a study which began in 2014, the final draft of the Visitor Amenities Sub-committee *Toilets and Showers Audit Report* was circulated to FoR Committee Members for comment. The stimulus for the study had arisen from many comments by FoR members and also the general public in relation to toilets within the Park. On 17 Sept. a request came from NPWS for a meeting to be arranged at a convenient time to discuss the report.

On 28 Sept., 2015, a meeting took place at Royal offices between Gary Dunnett, *Regional Manager, Metropolitan South West Region*, Kane Weeks, *Royal Areas Manager*, Bruce Cooper and myself to discuss the *Report*. Serious lack of funding was identified as an impediment to immediate maintenance actions. During discussions we made a point that the findings of this report is perhaps an indicator of the wider state of the condition of other assets within the Park. It is understood that some repairs have since been affected.

It is the now the intention, one year on, to revisit all sites and report on the current state of toilets, showers and other amenities in the lead up to the approaching high visitation season.

The study will also look at standards and guidelines from other organisations.

1 Oct, 2015. a meeting took place between Manjeet Grewal, Director of Shire Services and Justin Sauvage, Stormwater Engineer, (*Sutherland Council*), Scott Dovey, (*Keep Bundeena Beautiful*), Bruce Cooper and myself.

Sutherland Council is responsible for the maintenance of several roads that adjoin 'Park lands and the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the ways that Council and FoR members could work together to address the issue of litter within those areas. Aside from roadside litter there is also the disappointing situation in the Park whereby recyclable materials are not separated and all waste goes to landfill. We were aware that from earlier trials within the Park it had been found that the percentage of non-recyclables in the bins (contamination) was too high to process, hence the all-to-landfill classification. It was discussed that impending changes to the current Recycling Plant sorting equipment may allow contaminated recycle loads to be separated. We look forward to updates as this develops. Competency, training and authorisations for roadside litter pick-up workers were also discussed.

21 Oct, 2015, an information meeting was held at Royal where consultants presented the Draft Wattamolla Master Plan. The meeting was attended by a cross-section of community and Parks representatives including NPWS Managers, Police and National Parks Association. FoR was represented by Bruce Cooper and myself. The meeting was insightful in that it gave the background information on the preparation of the Draft Master Plan, it was perhaps unfortunate that some of the specific detail from the meeting was not spelt out in the later comment paper. The major issue nonetheless, is to develop vehicle management control strategies for peak visitation days, and the Draft Plan moves us towards that goal.

During October there was excitement at Maianbar and Deeban Spit when a pair of [\*Pied Oystercatchers\*](#) were found to be nesting there. Despite the best efforts of volunteers in managing the weekend crowds, daily visitors and dog walkers, the nesting was cut short by a fox that came from the Park during the night and took the eggs. This was repeated when the birds attempted to raise a second clutch. The event highlights the insidious nature of the feral animal populations within the Royal and our National Parks in general.

27 Nov. 2015. FoR members and Ranger Patsy Nagle surveyed the heavily overgrown track, from Hill Top Cottage to the lower shoreline track. It was agreed that FoR members would tender a price to NPWS to

clear and re-establish this historic track. An alternate track from Lamont's Cottage (ruins) to the rear of the Hill Top residence was also surveyed. A later survey for an additional short path from the shoreline track to the water did not reveal a suitable option as all the possible routes that we explored had associated safety concerns, such as drop-offs or unstable rocks and soils.

28 Nov. 2015. Members attended the Royal Bushies / FoR Christmas party, Patsy Nagle and Royal staff again turned on a great day. Recognition Awards were presented to the deserving volunteers.

16 Dec., 2015. Our planned meeting with the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Hon. Mark Speakman was cancelled due to his call-out to the aftermath of the Kurnell Tornado disaster.

28 Jan. 2016, The rescheduled meeting with the Minister took place in Sydney. Also present were Tom Bagnet, Director Metropolitan and Mountains, Kane Weeks, Royal Areas Manager (NPWS); Bruce Cooper, Jo Keohan and myself. Topics included the NSW Governments 2021 plan, and the strong commitment within that Plan to the promotion of volunteer recruitment. We stressed the need for a balance between full-time paid staff and volunteers. The Minister mentioned that some details of the new Plan of Management would be released in May. We were pleased to receive a letter from the Minister dated 31 Mar., giving a commitment, amongst other points, to investigate a strategic approach to recruitment of additional volunteers for the RNP.

26 Feb., 2016. A FoR Facebook post relating to the proposed Wedding Cake Rock viewing platform and fence drew around 8000 views, and over 100 comments.

Mar., 2016. FoR Members cleared the track from Hill Top Cottage to the lower foreshore track.

6 Mar., 2016. Clean-up Australia Day, following which we had good reports from members on both their individual and group efforts, a combined FoR members day was set for later, (See 29 April report).

11 Mar., 2016. FoR signed an agreement with Charles Sturt University as Placement Providers for work experience with two first year university students who were based in Wollongong. FoR were to provide work experience opportunities towards fulfilment of the practical requirements of their Environmental Science Courses. However, the students took a decision to commence their studies at the Albury campus and were not able to attend working days. I view this outcome with a tinge of regret as we had envisaged that this would have been a two-way learning opportunity for both the students and ourselves.

15 Mar., 2016. In the reconnoitre of a lead-up walk for the 2016 Seminar, a plant was noticed near Jibbon, on the coast, that defied several attempts at identification. A specimen was sent to the Botanic Gardens in Sydney on 14 April and we received word on 5 May that it was a new weed, from South Africa, and one which had not been previously recorded in Australia. On 15 May the plant was removed by Patsy Nagle and myself. Patsy soon-after prepared and mounted a large number of samples for distribution to various herbariums. Monitoring of the site will be ongoing to ensure that it does not spread from any seeds that are still on site. (The plant was *Plechostachys serpyllifolia*)

19 Mar., 2016. Maria Hitchcock, from *Save our Flora* project, accompanied members on a pre-seminar walk from the southern end of Beachcomber Drive, Bundeena, to the Shelly beach precinct at Jibbon. Maria also heads the *Correa Study Group* for the Australian Plants Society, and impressed those who attended with her passion for native plants and for her knowledge of the different plant species that we encountered along the way.

20 Mar. 2016. FoR Seminar and Expo.

Another fantastic seminar organised by FoR for both members and the general public. It was good to see Gary Dunnett, in attendance for NPWS.

There were 69 paid attendees with a total of 80 attending, including the presenters and expo. participants.

The speakers were:—

- *Atticus Fleming, CEO Australian Wildlife Conservancy*
- *Dr Jody Gunn, Executive Manager, SE, Bush Heritage Australia*
- *Dr Deborah Nias, Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group/Environmental Water Trust*
- *Richard Gilmore, The Nature Conservancy Australia/Environmental Water Trust*
- *Dr Holly Parsons, Birds in Backyards Program Manager, Bird Life Australia*
- *Evan Quartermain, Senior Program Manager, Wildlife Land Trust*
- *Maria Hitchcock, Save Our Flora.*

The expo featured stands from the above organisations and also:

- *Sutherland Shire Council*
- *Friends of Royal*
- *Rewilding Australia*
- *NPWS*
- *Bushcare*
- *Foundation for NPWS*

It was most heartening to learn from the presenters that there are people and organisations who are making a difference to the preservation of threatened and endangered species across Australia through a variety of innovative and cost effective programs.

My congratulations to the FoR organising committee who managed the day superbly.

16 Apr. 2016. FoR members continued to assist APS Conservation Officer, Daniel Clarke, with the locating and tagging of *Prostanthera densa* at [Marley](#)

18 Apr. 2016. Bruce Cooper and myself met informally with NPA representatives regarding the Draft Wattamolla Master Plan.

19 Apr. 2016. We initiated a meeting with Ms Alex Connor, OEH. Senior Volunteering Project Officer, Customer Experience Division. Kane Weeks attended along with Bruce Cooper and myself to discuss volunteer

recruitment and opportunities within the RNP. (I add here that new volunteers from this NPSW source would not necessarily become FoR members but might be encouraged to join FoR if they so wish). The meeting was positive one and there was a strong commitment given to providing roles for additional volunteers within the Royal. There was a recognition that current volunteers, for the most part, are long term members who carry a wealth of knowledge of Park issues and it would be most beneficial to recruit others who could join the ranks and learn from this accumulation of experience.

Bruce followed up with a meeting with Ms Connor on 12 May. where further recruitment options were discussed and strategies drawn to ensure retention of new volunteers.

(Our last contact on this matter was on 4 July 2016, where it was stated that there had not yet been any new volunteer roles created in Royal to recruit to. We are just waiting on word from NPWS.)

20 Apr., 2016. This was the cut-off date for submissions to Sutherland Shire Council relating to the Spring Gully Recreation Camp Development Applications. Members had been encouraged to read the applications and to make a submission to Council based on their opinions of the proposals.

29 Apr. 2016. FoR, Clean up Oz Day, at Wattamolla, netted 72kg of rubbish and the day was rounded-off with a BBQ lunch for the participants.

15 May, 2016, 5000 membership brochures were printed for distribution to targeted locations. Brochures have also been left at key points for distribution to the public, NPWS Visitors Centre, Sutherland Library, Specialist shops etc.

3 Jun., 2016, the Draft Wattamolla Master Plan comments document was submitted.

Members remarks on the draft were forwarded to me for the compilation of the FoR submission and I was pleased to receive like-minded comments which made the submission paper easier to compile. Of all the members replies, the proposed installation of a commercially

operated zip-line at the highly picturesque waterfall drew the highest level of criticism.

4-6 Jun., 2016. An east-coast-low weather event coinciding with peak tides resulted in serious erosion at Bonnie Vale and damage to EEC fences along Jibbon beach. On 10 June, eighteen of the NE section fence posts were reset and the integrity of that fence was restored. Unfortunately, the long central and western fences sections were destroyed leaving a large portion of fore dune / hind dune areas and middens again open to ongoing tramping, camping, firewood collecting, littering and toileting by the public and tramping and foraging by animals.

20 Jun., 2016. Anne Carrick and myself, on behalf of the FoR Visitor Amenities Sub-committee, presented the final report on our *Road Signage* study to Royal Area Manager, Kane Weeks.

Anne had managed the surveys, coordinated various site inspections and meetings, visited all sites and compiled and prioritised the final report. Of the multitude of sites over the length and breadth of the Park, 10 were selected as being of the highest priority for actions. The final 16 Page report is a concise yet detailed analysis of those sites and contains photos that highlight the points of issue that were drawn from the study. It is noted that since the report was presented, during mid July, work has been undertaken at the Curra Moors carpark to restore and seal the eastern side parking bay for up to 10 cars spaces, and to provide an adjacent 100m sealed roadside stopping bay for Police random RBT / drugs testing. A similar pull-over bay has been constructed near the RNP office on Farnell Avenue.

The end of June saw the completion of the major works that formed stage 1 of the major upgrade of the Royal Coast Track, from The Balconies to Marley Beach, with an additional upgrade of the Fire Trail from S.E. Bundeena to the coast. The work has been completed to a high standard and congratulations are due for all who were involved in the project.

1 Jul., 2016, A call came from NPWS seeking an expression of interest in FoR participating in the development of the new Plan of Management for the Royal areas. A formal reply was sent by email, expressing a keen interest in our member's participation in such an exercise. (the reply was also cc'ed to committee members, 5 Jul.)

20 Jul., 2016. Bruce and I met with the State Parliament Member for the Heathcote electorate, Mr. Lee Evans. Topics of discussion included the ongoing funding for the Royal Coast Track upgrade, Parks staffing levels, Pest species, including foxes. Litter and pollution issues, fire safety and Hazard Reduction burns relating to the current high fuel loads within the Park. One area of disagreement between us related to the future use of the Spring Gulley lands at Bundeena.

1 Aug., 2016 I accompanied the crew who are looking after *Track Sector 1*, and found a report of this worthy of inclusion here because Bitou Bush seedlings [\*Chrysanthemoides monilifera\*](#) were located and removed from the sand track east of the main Aboriginal engraving site. Bitou bush is a difficult weed to remove once it becomes established and it was good to see a vigilant crew at work. Later in the day a check at Shelley Beach led to a small [\*Crithmum maritimum\*](#) plant being removed, this is another weed that has almost been eradicated at this site since Patsy Nagle first identified a well-established outbreak there in 2012.

Streamwatch water quality testing was conducted at several sites on two separate occasions with good water quality findings. A combination of catch and release macroinvertebrate testing, and the standard chemical testing methods were used and included, for the first time, a site in Kangaroo creek, 2km upstream from Audley.

Perhaps of interest, Riffle Shrimps, [\*Australatya striolata\*](#), to 6cm long, were netted at one site. Although not uncommon, it was a first-time catch for the team. This largish shrimp is almost black in colour with a wide, off-white stripe, running along its upper body from head to tail.

During the year proposed changes to our Friends of Royal constitution to align with our preferred operating procedures were debated. The final phrasing was accepted at a *Special Meeting* on 23 June, 2016. The

changes were subsequently registered with the Department of Fair Trading.

In addition to the above I am continuing to assist a Melbourne University PhD student who has been studying [\*cyanogenesis\*](#) in *Proteaceae* (Waratah's and Lomatia's), at a site within the Royal NP, since October 2015, with more on-site monitoring to begin in September, 2016.

One issue that is nowadays constantly raised by members relates to very obvious cut-back in permanent staff numbers and reduction of general funding allocations. We have noted that the problem appears widespread across the hierarchy of Parks and Park management positions and both FoR members and I personally believe that the cuts have already gone too far.

It is with this in mind that we will view with great interest the proposals and commitments within the forthcoming Plan of Management, and to learn what resourcing will be allocated to maintain and to improve the values of, and everyday visitor experiences within, our great Royal National Park.

I wish to thank Tom Ledden who has stepped down from his role as secretary. Tom has been responsible for a good number of skilfully worded letters and documents since he took over the position, his meeting agendas and minutes have been timely, concise and accurate, and he has set and maintained a high standard for our organisation.

Out Treasurer, Ralph Cartwright has again made a significant contribution in time and effort to the management of our finances and in the organisation of speakers to our meetings.

Mention must be made of our FoR Committee, Sub-committees and members who have contributed so much throughout the year. My personal and endearing thanks to them.

John Arney  
President  
Friends of Royal

3 September. 2016

ATTACHMENT 2 Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2016

<b>Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated</b>		
	ABN	34 245 207 460
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		Prepared by : Ralph Cartwright
	For the year ended : 30-Jun-16	Date Prepared : 30-Jun-16
<b>Assets</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Westpac Bank Cheque account	\$9,196.82	\$1,474.67
Westpac Bank Savings account	\$2,624.52	\$2,597.45
PayPal account	\$4.46	\$91.44
	<u>\$11,825.80</u>	<u>\$4,163.56</u>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$11,825.80</u>	<u>\$4,163.56</u>
<b>Current Financial Members:</b>	62 (4)	

ATTACHMENT 3 Income and Expenditure Statement for year to 30  
June 2016

## Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated

ABN 34 245 207 460

### Income and Expenditure Statement

Prepared by : Ralph Cartwright

For the year ended : 30-Jun-16

Date Prepared : 1-Jul-16

#### Income

	2016	2015	
Member Subscriptions	\$1,345.00	\$1,745.00	Non Taxable
Donations	\$267.00	\$30.00	Non Taxable
Sales (Merchandise)	\$462.00	\$195.00	
Functions	\$1,810.00	\$990.00	Non Taxable
Grants	\$5,000.00	\$4,625.50	Non Taxable
Other (Googery Trackwork)	\$1,478.40	\$153.20	
PayPal Account	\$0.00	91.44	
Internal Transfer from Savings Account	\$0.00	1050.74	
Seminar Room Hire Refund	\$410.00		
	<b>\$10,772.40</b>	<b>\$8,880.88</b>	

#### Interest Received

Westpac Cheque Account	\$2.39	\$4.50	
Westpac Savings Account	\$27.07	\$37.45	
	<b>\$29.46</b>	<b>\$41.95</b>	

#### Total Income

	<b>\$10,801.86</b>	<b>\$8,922.83</b>	
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#### Expenditure

Seminar Costs	\$1,141.89		
Bank Fees and Charges		\$13.25	
Compliance Costs		\$53.00	
Marketing (Banners, Flyers, Posters)	\$558.00	\$750.68	
Insurance	\$400.00	\$400.00	
Web Site Maintainance	\$0.00	\$110.00	
Web Site Hosting	\$90.95	\$98.00	
Grants (CUA Litter Signs)	\$0.00	\$4,662.33	Non Taxable
Merchandise	\$546.85		
Book Sales	\$0.00	\$153.20	
Web Site Maintainance	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Donations	\$300.00	\$60.00	
Internal Transfer to new Savings Account	\$0.00	\$2,500.00	

#### Total Expenditure

	<b>\$3,037.69</b>	<b>\$6,300.46</b>	
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#### Net Surplus (deficiency)

	<b>\$7,764.17</b>	<b>\$2,622.37</b>	
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