

FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK INCORPORATED

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING

**Held on Thursday 27 April 2017 at
Environment Education Centre, Farnell Avenue, Royal National Park**

Meeting opened: at 4.12 pm

Chairperson – John Arney. Minutes – Basil Ellis

A/ Preliminaries

Acknowledgment of Country

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

Members present

John Arney, Ian Hill, Basil Ellis, Judith Carrick, Bruce Cooper, Peter Kahn, Josie Piper, Diane Townley, Tony Larkin, Jo Keohan, Dave Robson, George Cotis.

Visitors present

Adrian Johnstone (NPWS).

Apologies

Peter Stitt, Anne Carrick, Tom Ledden, Marilyn House, Allan House, Ralph Cartwright, Mark da Silva, Eileen Haley, Patsy Nagle, Neville Bethe, Ann Young.

B/ Routine Business

Adoption of Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

Copies of the minutes of the previous meeting of 23 February 2017 were available and corrections were passed to John Arney who will make these corrections. The intention in the longer term is to make General Meeting minutes available online to members.

There were no matters arising from these past minutes.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer Ralph Cartwright had given apologies for the meeting. John Arney presented information on the finances.

Current assets are:	\$
Cheque Account	5,638.82
Savings account	2,633.83
TOTAL	8,272.65

Key payments in this period have been \$410 for voluntary workers insurance, \$1,509 for "Weed Decks" (discussed below).

C/ Other Business

Park Report

Adrian Johnstone reported to the meeting on NPWS activities.

1. The Royal National Park (RNP, Park) has remained very busy during periods of good weather in the autumn. Extra security presence has been provided at Wedding Cake Rock and the security personnel have been briefed to provide an interactive, educative role with visitors to help prevent unsafe behaviour.
2. The NPWS has an alert process on their website to inform the public of Park conditions such as surf conditions and carpark capacity. This link will give the current alerts for the Figure Eight

Pools: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/lookouts/figure-eight-pools/local-alerts>

3. Related to safety, Adrian later described a smartphone app called “Emergency+” and encouraged its use for seeking assistance in the Park. Amongst other features, it facilitates sending location co-ordinates with calls for assistance. He also described the advantage of downloading PDF maps onto a smartphone. For these maps, see this link: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/royal-national-park/visitor-info#Maps-and-downloads>
4. These and other measures are contributing to safety. However, unfortunately there are indications of “signage fatigue” and some visitors tend to disregard advice.
5. There was discussion of the amount of litter in the Park. David Robson noted that new facilities including bins had been installed at northern entrance to the Coast Track.
6. Adrian described some planned hazard reduction burns. The priorities are judged on vegetation type, fuel loading, assets in that area and the requirement that areas are not burned more often than every seven years. A further constraint is availability of resources to perform the burns and some areas may go 20 years. There was discussion on protection of wildlife and the opportunities for mosaic burns.
7. The NPWS is updating an Asset Maintenance System (AMS). Patsy Nagle is heavily involved in activities such as walking all tracks and recording assets (e.g. bridges, culverts). This is necessary to justify maintenance funding.
8. Adrian noted there had been a number of NPWS staff movements. With Patsy’s involvement in AMS she is unavailable for support to the Friends of Royal (Friends) but she is still supporting the track trim groups. Deon van Rensburg has the role of Metropolitan Branch Director with responsibility for the RNP. Andres Bianchi is the acting Manager RNP. See this link: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/Rcoordinators.htm>
9. There is no change in status of the Plan of Management for the RNP.
10. There are upcoming NPWS events including a commemoration of Cook’s landing and a Paddy Pallin marathon in May along Lady Carrington Drive.

Coastal Track Progress

John Arney noted further work on the Coast Track including steps at North Garie and fibreglass track at Wattamola. Adrian reported that a lot of this work would be complete by June.

Volunteer Strategy

Basil Ellis reported to the meeting on work within the Committee on volunteer opportunities and strategy. This is increasing in importance with Patsy Nagle assigned to other work. A letter is being sent to the Acting Manager Andres Bianchi.

Training Seminars

The first of four volunteer training seminars coordinated by Patsy Nagle has taken place at the Kamay Botany Bay Discovery Centre on Saturday 22 April and a further seminar will be held there on Saturday 6 May. The last two will be in the Audley Dancehall on Saturday 27 May and Saturday 17 June. The Friends of Royal are providing financial support for the Audley seminars.

Weeddeck Cards

John Arney presented to the meeting the recently purchased decks of weed identification cards for use by volunteers.

Grant Monies and Actions

The Friends have sourced grant money which is being used for initiatives including support of approximately \$2,400 for the training seminars at Audley. Bruce Cooper noted that there are sources of grant money available for initiatives in the Park. These need to be developed in cooperation with NPWS.

Spring Gully Status

Jo Keohan gave a summary of the status of the proposed Spring Gully development. The Land and Environment Court has made directions to the applicant to satisfy the court that they have obtained legal access to the site (which requires the NPWS to grant approval for road access through the Park) and that they have obtained a legal basis upon which they can manage an asset protection zone on the adjoining Sussex St paper road (land privately owned by another party) in perpetuity.

Bungoona Path Walk

Peter Kahn explained the need for an update to an information sheet for the Bungoona path and for other support. The meeting requested Peter to send information about these needs to the Friends Committee who would endeavour to provide support.

Clean Up Australia (CUA)

Jo Keohan reported that staff had just completed a clean up activity. There was general discussion on litter in the Park. The amount of litter at Wattamolla is less than this time last year and Bonnie Vale is probably a higher priority. John Arney will discuss with others on a possible clean up activity.

Reports

John Arney reported on the status of sub-committee work. The parking and signage reports has been sent to Andres.

Website Update

Mark da Silva (who had given apologies to the meeting) will be updating the website. The potential for greater use of Facebook was discussed.

“Scrap Book” Events

John Arney briefly mentioned the current media reports relating to the Park. Links to these were attached to the Agenda for the meeting.

D/ General Business

Member records and communication

The processes for maintaining accurate member records were briefly discussed. The Committee will review these.

Meeting closed: at 6.10p.m.

Next meeting: 4:00 p.m. Thursday 22 June, 2017 at the Environment Education Centre.

Adoption

These minutes were adopted on 22 June, 2017 as an accurate record of the meeting.

Signed: John Arney

Date: