**FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK INCORPORATED**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 17 October, 2019 at 4pm**

**At the Environment Education Centre, Farnell Avenue, Royal National Park**

**Meeting opened:** at approximately 4.00 pm

**Chairperson – Ian Hill. Minutes – Ian Hill,**

**Agenda Preliminaries**

**Members present**

Ian Hill, John Arney, Ralph Cartwright, Neville Bethe, Peter Kahn, Peter Donley, Liz Donley, Josie Piper, Diane Townley, Tony Larkin, Paul Rendell, Mark da Silva

**Visitors present**

Shaun Elwood (NPWS).

**Apologies**

Anne Carrick, Judith Carrick, Helen Voysey, Jo Keohan, Merilyn House, Allan House, Patricia Nagle, Eileen Hayley.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

President Ian Hill gave the Acknowledgement of Country.

**Routine Business**

Held over due to the requirements of the Special General Meeting.

**Adoption of Previous Minutes**

The minutes for the Thursday 22 August 2019meeting were tabled. They were posted on the website.

The *Standing Orders* of the meeting were suspended and the presenters began their talks.

**Speakers**

Linda Groom, Saving Kosciuszko Walk and Horse Threatened Fauna and Flora of the Kosciuszko National Park. Linda and her husband had travelled from Canberra

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**Kosciuszko: “It’s a Park. Not a Paddock”**

Linda’s talk was accompanied by a power point presentation with good quality photographs. She recounted how the horse revered in the Man from Snowy River poem was not a brumby and so the need for preservation of brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park is a baseless myth. A photograph showed a brumby wallowing in a muddy section of a stream due to such activities by horses. Her talk then systematically dealt with means of eradication of brumbies from a cost and result perspective and concluded with shooting being by far the most effective by a great margin.

Linda then dealt with the vegetation and climatic changes brumby numbers are causing. The necessity for sphagnum moss for water retention and year round release was covered and how brumbies are destroying this.

An important fact presented was that horse trails create dry paths across the wilderness and that one horse trail can drain a whole swamps.

She also covered fauna impacts including the needs of the Thirsty Mouse.

Her talk then finished with coverage of the Sydney to Kosciuszko Walk which she originated and organized. As lead organizer this monumental task involved a 560km, 35 day walk in 2018, which started in Sydney and ended at the summit Kosciuszko, drawing the public’s attention to recent legislation that was enacted to protect the Brumbies.

This involved quite some negotiation with land owners the worst of which was ARTC as the disused rail corridor from Queanbeyan to Cooma was used. This activity achieved 12300 signatures precipitating a State Parliamentary debate over Brumbies in the Park.

Reference: <https://reclaimkosci.org.au/> .

The 45min presentation was well received by members. Immediately following her talk, and a series of questions from members, Linda was thanked for her very professional and compelling description of the significant damage that is being wrought by the conservatively estimated 6000 Brumbies in the KN Park.

Linda also had some handouts including 3 colouring in sheets and a 9 page handout of the Feral Horse Issue

Gaylene Harris, Suzanne Larson Volunteer Team NPWS

**Volunteering in National Parks**

Suzanne Larson led an oral presentation of the current status with the new VIP Volunteering Initiative.

Gaylene works out of the NPWS Queanbeyan office and had made a great effort to meet with us on the day. Gaylene and Susanne are endeavouring to build a program that will support and streamline the volunteering system using a new portal that will work on computer and phone devices.

Content

Staff have been in training for over a year.

The initiative covers every aspect of volunteering including ‘Save our Species’, Citizen Science, Heritage, Streamwatch and Landcare.

Affiliated groups include the Duke of Edinburgh programs

The goal of the VIP is to provide a simplified volunteering register using a cloud base portal to log and map volunteer hours.

The VIP system aims for one volunteering system rather than many. It will become mandatory for future volunteering.

The rationale for the program was a ready references for the Minister for the Environment and staff. This is an important consideration given 3 Million hours of volunteering would be worth AU$5 million if sourced.

Staff also can be deployed to other activities such as outdoor work more profitably with the new system rather than using part of their time logging volunteer hours.

At the Royal National Park the contact person will be Adrian Johnston.

Some discussion occurred with Gaylene Harris as to the Web profile for volunteering with FOR and or Royal Bushies. The issue being that Royal Bushies are not necessarily members of Friends of Royal.

The Bush Regeneration segment of the VIP Volunteering Initiative is not yet available.

Kamay’s Busy Bees are given as an example, see the following link,:-

<https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicOrganization/675e25b1-b254-4493-b389-9f58279fa264/Gvi/0acbfb93-13c4-4b9c-a1af-b36af741aa55/2>

and the registration Link:-

<https://app.betterimpact.com/Application?OrganizationGuid=675e25b1-b254-4493-b389-9f58279fa264&ApplicationFormNumber=1>

Both ladies gave enthusiastic responses to member’s questions and it was heartening to see that we may finally get a Volunteer Strategy for the Royal.

Reporting by Ian Hill and John Arney

**Correspondence**

Held over due to special large agenda items

**Treasurer’s Report**

Held over due to special large agenda items

**C/ Other Business**

Held over due to special large agenda items

**D/ General Business**

Held over due to special large agenda items

**Meeting closed:** at 6.00p.m.