

**Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated**  
**Draft Minutes of General Meeting**  
**Held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2022, at 4pm via Zoom**

**Meeting opened at:** 4.03pm

**Chairperson:** Basil Ellis

**Minutes:** Diane Townley

**Committee Members present:**

Basil Ellis, Ian Hill, John Arney, Ralph Cartwright, Peter Donley, Neville Bethe, Diane Townley, David Croft- NPWS Liaison

**Other Members present:** Mark Franklin, Rhonda Jackson, Gareth Denyer, Catherine Reynolds, Peter Kahn

**Apologies:** Dave Robson, Tony Larkin, Jan Holloway

**Acknowledgement of Country**

Basil gave the Acknowledgment of Country

**Changes to meeting procedure**

The following items will be included in the future

- Minutes of previous meeting discussed
- Amendments made where necessary
- Minutes accepted and seconded
- Business arising from the Minutes not otherwise listed in the Agenda

It was decided at the last Committee Meeting to maintain the process of publishing draft Minutes within a week for quick feedback but to include a formal adoption process at the next meeting to allow greater input from members and to be more in line with standard meeting procedures.

**Correspondence:**

- Ralph received an email concerning a koala workshop on 26<sup>th</sup> July at Rathane Camp and will circulate it to see if anyone is interested in attending.
- Ralph had information from Council on possible grants. Basil presented a summary of the ones he felt were most appropriate for us.

Two groups in particular were interesting;

- Community Conservation Grants from the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife ( link at [fnpw.org.au/grants/](http://fnpw.org.au/grants/)) to assist in, among other things, protection of native species. Amounts \$5-15,000. Closing date 25<sup>th</sup> August.
- Tucker Foundation Grants which prioritise small volunteer groups for various reasons including preservation of natural reserves. Amounts to \$25,000, closing date for first round, 14<sup>th</sup> August.

- There were some suggestions for grant funding projects:  
Purchasing “Weeddeck” or weed reference books.  
Another suggestion was a “welcome kit” for new volunteers.
- Basil will be the contact point for any ideas/ suggestions. These will be discussed at the July Committee meeting which will allow time to develop any applications before the August deadlines.
- Mark has experience in grant writing and offered to assist.

#### **Treasurers Report:**

- \$7,578.64 total in bank and PayPal accounts.
- Currently we have 49 financial members, including one new member since the last report.
- Membership fees are due in the new financial year and Ralph will send around reminders.
- Some members informed Ralph that they have had difficulty receiving his newsletters and Zoom links for meetings, especially gmail users. It was suggested that this be brought to the members’ attention to alert them to these issues.
- Basil and Catherine will discuss these issues and whether we need the help of an IT professional. This could be one of our members or an outside agency.

#### **Other Business:**

- Park Report
  - Closures- the Coast Track is closed between Garie and Little Garie. Also near Otford from Monday to Friday for track upgrades which should continue until September. Garie Road has significant damage and will be closed until later in the year. Wattamolla is close to opening and may be opened for the coming weekend.
  - 11 new suburb names have been created for RNP. Creating new suburbs will narrow down locations and avoid confusion, improving search and rescue as well as operational matters.
  - Over the next few months contractors will be engaged in trimming the fire trails. Conservation areas have been identified and the new trimming tools cut more cleanly reducing damage to vegetation.
  - NPWS staff have been cleaning up sites of habitation that are no longer used on the western fringes of the park and liaising with support services to assist the homeless population living in the park. Dave would like anyone who finds sites of habitation to send an email to NPWS with a GPS location so these can be followed up on.
  - Contractors are working on weed removal at Bonnie Vale.
  - The deer cull a few weeks ago in the Jibbon/Spring Gully area removed 49 deer from the park. 24 more were also culled in the Garie area. Follow up shows that where culling has taken place deer are coming back into those areas in greatly reduced numbers. There will be one more cull this year, probably in August.

Catherine reported that the south end of Brighton Street Bundeena has large numbers of deer. Dave stated that any control here needs to be coordinated with Sutherland Council.

- Neville asked about the poor condition of the car park on McKell Avenue near the toll booth and whether there were any plans to improve it. Dave said at this stage it is not a priority.
  - John asked whether Friends could do anything to help expedite improvements at Audley Weir. Catherine said that feedback had been provided to Bundeena Chamber of Commerce which had been working through Lee Evans, the local State Member.
  - Ian reported that rocks had been removed from drains made by the track builders at the Otford end of the Coast Track.
  - Basil asked about the Team Leader Ranger position. Adrian Johnstone has taken a position in Cumberland. The job has been advertised and interviews will occur next week.
  - Neville asked why Bandy Bandy house had been demolished. There were too many problems with asbestos, lead and mould. The cost involved in its renovation could not be justified.
  - Catherine asked whether there had been any discussion about koala translocation. Dave did not think this had been proposed.
- Meeting with Brendon Neilly the Area Manager  
Besides points made in Dave Croft's report the following things were discussed with Brendon
    - Fox control. Although their impact is acknowledged by NPWS, control is problematic and will only be pursued in certain circumstances such as the protection of threatened species.
    - Brendon has no objections to us holding our August AGM in the NPWS Office.
    - Plan of Management. This has been affected by the disbanding of Regional Advisory Committees and when it will be finalised is not yet known.
- **Recent Activities:**
    - Red Jacks- The targeted approach is very successful. Cestrum and Senna are still the main weeds. Tony Larkin passed on his comments regarding the progress made at Red Jack's. He congratulated all involved, especially Dave Robson who has coordinated the work.
- **Future Activities:**
    - Plant Walk: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July. Location to be decided. John will walk the tracks to see which is the most suitable after the rains. Meet at 9.30. It will be put on the website. Register on the Volunteer Calendar.
    - Red Jacks again on 22<sup>nd</sup> July and 8<sup>th</sup> August due to Middle Rill still being inaccessible.
- **General Business**
    - Australian Plant Society Conference

Ralph gave a summary of the conference to be held at Kiama on September 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.

The theme is Australian Plants- Past, Present, Future.

At present there are fewer registrations than usual as interstate visitors are not coming in the expected numbers. There are talks and tours, including trips to the RNP. There are over 30 speakers with Professor David Keith giving the keynote address.

The link for those interested is

<https://events.humanitix.com/2022kiama>

- Streamwatch

John is training members of the Cabin Communities to continue this work.

There was discussion concerning whether it is feasible to get water testing in other areas of RNP up and running again. The costs are high. \$5,000 for chemical testing.

Macroinvertebrate testing requires expert input which we do not have.

We have not received a copy of the EDNA report from Gilad's testing for the platypus project. Basil will contact Gilad to follow up on this.

- Update on Bundeena/Maianbar Expo planning

Diane has received only one offer to man the FoR stall.

We have the yellow flyers to give out. John will arrange for them to be delivered to the expo.

Catherine offered FoR a spot on the SSEC stall so that the flyers can be distributed. Local environmental groups can share the same stall with SSEC, FoR and maybe the National Parks Association together.

- Spring Gully Update

As Mark was not at the meeting, there was no report.

- Jibbon Bushcare Initiative

Flyers are ready to distribute at the Expo to launch this initiative and collect names of those interested in joining.

#### **Other Business:**

- Suggestions for speakers at subsequent meetings.

Ralph suggested Chris Orlando from the University of Sydney to speak about the Scorecard

- Diane has received a response from Lee Evans and the Minister for Agriculture regarding the proposed dredging of Port Hacking near Deeban Spit, Maianbar. There was concern by DPI Fisheries that any use of dredge spoil to build up roost sites for the wading birds would have negative effects on the nearby seagrass beds. DPI Fisheries proposed that further assessment was needed and a separate rehabilitation project for the roost area would better address the needs of the birds.

Dave also made a submission on behalf of FoR. We need to discuss ways of supporting habitat protection for the shorebirds of Port Hacking and where we take this issue from here.

**Meeting closed: 6.06 pm**

**Next Committee Meeting:**

- Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 4pm via Zoom

**Next General Meeting and AGM**

- Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August 4pm, venue to be decided