**FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK INCORPORATED**

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 23rd February 2023 at 4.00pm at EEC and via Zoom**

**Meeting opened:** at 4.00pm

**Chairperson – Basil Ellis. Minutes – Dave Robson**

**2022/23 Committee Members present**

Basil Ellis, Ralph Cartwright, Dave Robson, Diane Townley, Ian Hill, Peter Donley, Neville Bethe

Dave Croft – Team Leader Rangers (Royal Area)

**General Members present**

Tony Larkin, Josie Piper, Paul Stork, Peter Currie, Bridget Currie, Steve Johnston, Peter Kahn, Liz Donley, Gareth Denyer, Mark Richards, Jo Keohan

**Apologies:** John Arney

**Acknowledgement of Country**

Basil gave the Acknowledgement of Country.

**Treasurer’s Report**

* $7600 in bank and Paypal accounts
* 45 financial members
* We purchased $600 of Linnane Society field guides and one third of our copies have been sold in the first two or three weeks since the receipt of the reprinted copies.

**Correspondence**

* Response from EPA to our submission re the Metropolitan Coal mine pollution was that the review of the mine’s license will occur two years early and will include a review of the pollutants that need to be measured.
  + Ian additionally reported that the EPA has released interim requirements (a copy of these will be forwarded and included with these minutes)
    - One requirement is for the mine to employ people with suitable skillsets to ensure that the monitoring and measurement of pollutants does occur
    - There are a series of deadlines that must be met by the mine
  + Discussion re the inaccuracies in the article in the Leader and also the difficulty in determining “legacy” coal from new pollution
* Mark Pearce re The Message of the Lyrebird film– proposal to joint screen
  + We don’t have the facilities to joint screen but we will discuss with the Audley café and determine if that is an option. If not then the film can be released to members for their viewing at home at a cost to them of approx $10
* NCC – Melanie Booth
  + Correspondence and meetings have occurred
  + Two Zoom meetings are coming soon in which political parties and candidates have a Q&A
    - Local candidates Monday 27th , 6.30pm
    - State Wednesday 1st March, 6pm to 7.15pm at Sydney Town Hall
* Landcare NSW – re contacting local candidates to determine if commitments can be obtained to $59million funding

**Park Report by Dave Croft – Team Leader Rangers – Royal Area**

* Bonnie Vale day use area is to be resurfaced
* Garrawarra Farm Rd is being tarmacked. Project will take 9 weeks and the road is closed during weekdays
* Hazard reduction
  + Tree pruning in East Heathcote APZ
* Thin Green Line – World Ranger Gala Day – July 1st Bulli Tops (flyer will be attached to these minutes)
* Heathcote National Park – Koala project will finish in June
  + Many hundreds of trees have been planted to date
  + Trailbike riders were in the area on the weekend and destroyed some of the plantings
* Massive downpour on Thursday 9th resulted in near record flood levels at Audley
  + Damage to the boatshed
  + 30cm water levels through the visitor centre and café
  + Luckily the power was off when the flooding occurred
  + Lady Carrington Drive has damage
  + New turf in front of the café is damaged
  + A substantial insurance claim is in progress
  + The load limit has been dropped on Varney’s Bridge as a precaution
* Some helicopter lifts for track construction occurring
  + Honeymoon Track
  + Palm Jungle on the Coast Track
* RMS advanced in planning the Garie Rd repair but no timeframe is known
* Gate at Boatshed to be asked to be left open
* Concern was raised that the carpark on McKell Avenue near the old toll booths is always flooded
* Concern was raised that the Wattle Forest Road potholes are getting huge
* Patsy’s huge contribution was acknowledged by all.
* New ranger Jai has been hired into Dave Croft’s old job.

**Presentation by Jason Luke – Reptiles of the Royal and Heathcote National Parks**

* Jason gave a brilliant presentation on the reptiles all around us. Illustrated by around 60 great photos, Jason’s insights were fascinating.

**Other Business**

* Plan of Management review of final vs draft
  + Agreed that we would hold a detailed discussion at the next general meeting
  + Comment that Vertebrate fauna surveys have been removed from the final version. Dave to review and confirm.
* Feral Deer Plan - extent of deer problem in Australia
  + Deer have proliferated so greatly in the last 20 years that it is becoming equivalent to the rabbit plague
  + Deer culling by aerial shooting is used in the RNP. The Feral Deer Plan aims to develop other controls including baiting.
* Future activities
  + Middle Rill bush regen on Friday 3rd March
  + Red Jacks Pt bush regen on Friday 17th March

**Meeting closed:** at 6.20 p.m.

**Next Committee Meeting**

* Wednesday 23 March 2023 at 4pm via Zoom.

**Next General Meeting**

* Thursday 27 April 2023 at 4 pm –EEC and Zoom