



**HUNTER WILDLIFE RESCUE (NATF<sup>INC</sup>)**  
**GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025**  
**HWR Building at Hunter Wetlands Centre at 10am**

**Meeting commenced:** 10:03am

**Chairperson:** Kate Randolph (Acting President)

**Acknowledgement of Country** (Kate Randolph)

**Present:** Bronwyn Shields (BS), Christine Beer (CB), Garth Christian (GC), Desiree Marshall (DM), Kate Randolph (KR), Lisa Thomson (LT), Kerry Walker (KW), Joan Jones (JJ), Jim Talty (JT), Dan Reardon (DR), Michelle Kelly (MK), Joan Jones (JJ), Chrissy Cabot (CC), Claire Philps (CP), Charmian Eckersley (CE), Katherine Austen (KA), Daniel Gibson (DG)

**Apologies:** Suzanne Pettit (SP), Tania Rossiter (TR) Evy Christian (EC), Teresa Purnell (TP), Tracy Scott (TS), Peter Faure (PF), Christine Scotman (CS), Donna Von-Stanke (DV-S), Cameron Powell (CP), Kerry Walker (KW), Tania Rossiter (TR), Dale Jackaman (J), Michelle Wilkinson-Beards (MW-B)

**1. Minutes of previous meeting are a true copy**

Moved: LT                      Seconded: JT                      Accepted by all.

**2. General Business**

**i) Update re Avian Flu:**

Discussion:

- Been going since 2019, not in Australia or NZ yet.
- H1N5 strain is of interest – is highly pathogenistic (i.e. a measure of how likely is it to kill chickens)
- Not in Australia as of yet, we have avoided via migratory birds for another year. But it is suspected to come to our shores when the Shearwaters return (Oct/Nov)?
- It is now present in the Philippines and sub-Antarctic islands.
- Testing continues in the North of Australia and with indigenous support.
  
- **Members are encouraged to check the Wildlife Health Australia website** (best source for information) as it is a toolbox for wildlife care providers.
- **Members are advised that if 5 or more of the same species of bird are found in the same area, it is a notifiable event. The Emergency Animal Hotline number needs to be called (1800 675 888). You will be requested to provide video footage/photos, types of species and location information to them.**
- Landowners are responsible for the discarding of the animals. Be aware predators can be affected by this virus also – e.g. EPA, Council, NPWS.
- Not many of those infected actually survive.
- KR provided a “flowchart for avian flu to simplify the process (will be added to HWR Members section of Website).
- Focus needs to be:
  - PPE
  - Biosecurity in the home and PPE at home/in the field (see Handout).
  - HWR Website – resources to be added for Members
  - Suggestion to trial “VIRKON” (disinfectant as good quality at F10, but cheaper) – available in sachets, and at produce stores/online. If using, just need to wear gloves/glasses (gives a soapy feel to the skin).

**Action:**

- Members encouraged to review Wildlife Health Australia website
- KR to add resources for Avian Flu and “What to Do” FlowChart to the Members’ Website page
- Members are encouraged to store the Emergency Animal Hotline Number in their phones for future use, if needed (1800 675 888).
- Members are encouraged to be familiar with the Biosecurity in the home/in the field handout.
- Members are encouraged to be aware of PPE requirements in general when working with any animals, but in particular with infected birds for when Avian Flu may be present.

ii) Update re Baskets/Nets:

Still awaiting baskets to arrive from overseas; Nets are available for \$4 from the HWR Wetlands Centre.

**Action: CB to continue follow-up of the baskets. If Members are wanting a net, speak with CB.**

**3. President’s Report:** Presented by KR.

Report provided by KR:

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“Dear Members,

What a busy start to the year we have already had! With Flying fox disasters, extreme weather events and suspected bird poisoning on top of the normal day-to-day rescues, we have all hit the ground running!! To update you on the Corella suspected poisoning EPA are still investigating and we are still awaiting pathology results. We do not know the source at this stage. We believe over 300 birds were impacted, over 90 birds were brought into care, and we are hoping to release approximately 80 on Sunday. Thank you to everyone that helped with rescue, care, transport, cleaning, feeding etc it was a fantastic team effort. The Flying Foxes throughout the Hunter have been impacted by lighting strikes, heat stress and land clearing. Many animals were affected and brought into care under the wonderful flying fox team who have done an amazing job in rehabilitating and releasing these animals back into the wild. Creche has been very successful this year and multiple flying foxes have been released from many locations.

Hunter Wildlife Rescue was successful in the grant application from Foundation for National Parks to continue the mange program. This will allow the wombat team to continue to treat wombats in the field for mange, purchase vital equipment and educate the community.

Hunter Wildlife Rescue has applied for many grants by our amazing grants officer, Susan Nunn and we have been successful in many including from the Foundation for National Parks and Newcastle City Council. We are waiting to hear back from many other grant applications, so fingers crossed. Our Fundraising Officer and team have been hard at work raising vital funds and have many events on the horizon which is fantastic! New training course dates will be sent out soon and we have many exciting courses coming up. There are still spaces available for the bird course on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, so please send your applications ASAP. Our Webmaster, Gabrielle Witter has done a fantastic job updating our website and we have received rave reviews from members of the public, NPWS and others. If you have any content or stories, please contact the webmaster and the newsletter editor.

Please continue to send in your data monthly to our Database Officer, as this is part of our license but also vital in many other ways such as having areas listed as black spots, funding and habitat protection. I attended the NSW Wildlife Council meeting at the beginning of the year and met with delegates from all wildlife groups in NSW and NPWS. The NWC has many projects that will aid the rehabilitation sector such

as grants, advocacy on wildlife groups behalf to NPWS and government and Avian Influenza preparedness.

The Management Committee are working on Avian Influenza preparedness now as Hunter Wildlife Rescue is in a high-risk zone given our wetlands and multiple poultry farms in the area. I encourage you all to go to the Wildlife Health Australia and read the current information [Alert - H5N1 \(H5 bird flu\) global outbreak](#). Losing Audrey was extremely difficult and heartbreaking to us all, I want to thank everyone for their ongoing support, continued hard work and commitment to our wildlife. She would be very proud of you all as I am. “

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**4. Secretary Report:** Presented by BS.

- HWR Leaflets have been updated and more business cards will soon be available.
- There have been community donations accepted, which will either be passed to the FoodBank or distributed among relevant carers/rescuers to use.
- A lot of correspondence lately has been with Media – Burdekin Park disaster event, and the corella disaster event. Newspapers, TV and radio, and online media have been in contact. Thanks to those that have addressed the media on behalf of HWR.
- In recent weeks, there have been a number of MOPs making contact via email about injured animals needing rescuing. If able, keep spreading the word for MOPs to go via the Hotline number rather than email, as email doesn't get checked as often as the rescue chat/X-M.

**5. Treasurer's Report:** Presented by JJ.

- End of Financial year was the 31/3/25.
- HWR had spent approx. \$18,000 more than what was received for the last financial year.
- A lot of money is spent on food (rest of cost associated with subsidies by the FoodBank), but this can't be helped.
- Recent GoFundMe page for the Corella disaster event has received over \$10,000 in donations. Separate donations to the Bank account for this event were \$1,104.

**6. Hunter Wildlife Advocacy Working Party:** Presented by DM.

Report provided by Desiree Marshall:

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## 1. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Local Project Updates:

BUCKETTY BREWERY DEVELOPMENT 5439 George Downes Dve: DA 8/2023/298/1, Cessnock Council:

- DA has been lodged for several years. Clearance of 44 HA of bushland was initially rejected but developer appealed. HWR has key concerns over habitat loss/ significant koala population in the area.
- Action taken: 19.2.25: HWR provided written objections to as part of council deliberations.
- Independent councilors temporarily halted approval pending investigation of previous land clearing by developer.

- Outcome: March 2025: Development approval has subsequently been granted. Bucketty Brewery development will proceed.

#### MYALL ROAD, GARDEN SUBURB, DA/1284/2013, (LMCC):

- Land clearing commenced 11.3.25, and is scheduled to continue for 6 weeks (completion approx. 25.4.25).
- Actions: HAWP members attended site 11.3.25 to support local advocacy group (SMRB). Established contact with site ecologist and Landcom Community Liaison Officer.
- Liaised with designated ecologist on regular basis for update – bush removed to allow access by heavy machinery 11.3.25, most habitat trees felled by 27.3.24. Reported losses, 2 x adult bandicoots, 1 x snake (Golden Crown Snake). Environmental consultant reports displacement of uninjured ringtail and brushtail possums (nos. not recorded).

#### HUNTER TRANSMISSION PROJECT (ENERGY CO)

- Big thank you to our members who responded to Social Impact Survey as requested 28.2.25.
- HAWP continues to proactively engage with EnergyCo at every opportunity. Most recently, HAWP members attended the Community Consultation session in Cessnock, Tuesday, 25.3.25.
  - Head of Regional Reference Group reiterated support for HWR and our request for replacement soft release facility.
  - Ecological surveys reportedly almost completed: Expert HWR species specific expertise offered in remaining fauna surveys.
  - The completed EIS is expected mid-year (June- July 2025).
  - Action: Expected opportunity early April: HWR inclusion -invitation only presentation re EIS update/ input (environmental group specific).
  - Action: Once the EIS is published, the community will have 4 weeks to make formal submissions/ provide official feedback.
  - Action: HWR will contribute written submission.

NEWCASTLE FORRESTS RALLY, 23.3.25: HAWP member Kerry, spoke, courtesy of Save Link Rd Forrest Group.

LINK RD FOREST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT: Charmian Eckersley to speak regarding submission opportunity to help Newcastle Council rezone 147 HA of bushland to Environmental and Open Space instead of Housing Release Area. Ref: Amendment of Local Strategic Planning Statement Submission deadline: 13.4.25 Link: [Link Road Rezoning — HCEC](#)

#### **Advocacy- local government:**

January 2025: HWR submission to Newcastle Council: Support Councilor McCabe's effort to ban shark nets on Newcastle Beaches, due to negative impacts of netting on other marine species and the proven existence of more effective shark surveillance and management strategies available.

#### **Advocacy- State government**

Alliance with Nature Conservation Council

- Renewable Energy Transmission: HWR collaborated with 15 other NCC members to formulate three core policy recommendations, advocating for increased nature positive outcomes, and community benefits, in the Hunter and New England Renewable Energy rollout.
  - NSW parliamentary representation: 19-20.3.25: KW represented HWR in deputation to NSW Parliament. 10 meetings with MPs. Received leads for next steps for 3 policy recommendations.
- Action: Ongoing “

Save the Link Road (Wallsend to Eleebana area): Presented by Charmian Eckersley

- Land has not currently been rezoned (592 Hectares)
- Developer is Eden Estates
- Council will reserve 147 Hectares south of the Link Road for natural bushland at this stage.
- Save the Link Road are after people's submissions to help with numbers to lobby Council.

**Action:**

- **Save the Link Road: Members are encouraged to check out the Save the Link Road Forests website**
- **HWR are to write a submission on behalf of HWR for the Save the Link Road project.**
- **Members are encouraged to either complete the submission templates, or write their own submissions to add to the numbers of those opposing this development.**

**7. Training/Upskill: Donning & Doffing**

Provided by Lisa Thomson and Michelle Kelly

**8. Business Arising:**

a) Corella Disaster Event:

- 300-400 poisoned in Newcastle. Avian Flu and Newcastle Disease has been ruled out. Toxicology results are pending. There was a Treatment Plan in place for the Corellas via Hamilton Vet, and an Avian Specialist in Sydney consulted.
- A GoFundMe has been established and many interviews conducted with Media.
- A huge thankyou to all that has been involved thus far, whether rescue, or care.
- Potential release is set for Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

b) Uniforms:

- Kate Hungerford has been responsible for Uniforms.
- There is a new HWR shirt coming (will be \$38.50), and jacket (price not given yet). Once available, these will be available via the Website, and Members notified via email/WhatsApp.

c) Tomago Disaster Relief:

- Disaster Field Co-Ordinator: Chrissy Cabot
- Request for a Working Bee to clean up the Tomago Sheds, and to remove any expired equipment.
- Disaster Relief trailer and Waterboard key is located at Chrissy's place currently.
- A future date for the Working Bee is to be determined, once weather cools down (June/July)?

**Action: Date for Working Party to be determined.**

d) Data Submission:

Data to be submitted monthly to Peter Jones. All data for the 2024-2025 year needs to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Data is important for Funding and Development Submissions.

e) Post Release Procedures:

Species Co-Ordinators to be informed of outcomes for each rescue/vet pickup as per requirements by NPWS.

## 9. Business from the Floor

- KR: Reminder: Those caring to check-in with Species Co-ordinator once a week for review of Treatment/Release plans for animals in care.
- CC: CC lives in Paterson – information to Members that a quarry is to be developed in the area. It is expected there will be trucks every 2 ½ minutes on the road between Lorn/Bolwarra Heights and Woodville.
- PPE: There are Hubs of PPE established. FoodBank also has PPE gear available.

Meeting Closed: 11:32am

**Next meeting: Mark in your calendars:**

**AGM:** HWR Hunter Wetlands Building Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 10am