



VNPA Annual General Meeting 13 October 2020

**6.30 - 8.00pm
Zoom Meeting**

Minutes of the 68th AGM

1. **WELCOME AND OVERVIEW: President, Dr Bruce McGregor** opened the meeting at 6-30pm by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting was held. Bruce noted the agenda and associated materials were issued via an email sent on 21 September and via the VNPA website. Bruce also noted that this is an open meeting via Zoom and provided some instruction on how people should interact via Zoom chat functionality.
 - 1.1 **UPDATE FROM VNPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Matt Ruchel** summarised the campaign advocacy achievements of 2019/2020 including: parks protection & management; bushfire impacts & fire policy; forests & threatened species; grasslands & Melbourne strategic assessment; and some other issues. Matt also thanked the VNPA community including donors, members, volunteers, Council members and staff for their support and commitment during a very challenging year.
 - 1.2 **NATURE CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNER: Shannon Hurley** provided an update on the various campaigns to protect our seas and shores including: campaigning against the AGL Gas facility in Westernport Bay; protecting the spider crabs during the annual spider crab aggregation event; the marine & coastal reforms agenda; and the ongoing successful campaign to keep racehorses off the Belfast Coastal Reserve.

Shannon also provided an update on the progress of the new parks proposed for the Central West, in particular: the ongoing logging around Mt Cole; the Mt Cole Grevillea now officially listed as a threatened species; and the actions taken to remind government of their obligation to act on the VEAC recommendations.
 - 1.3 **COMMUNITY LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER: Caitlin Griffith** shared some inspiring stories about the ways we have enabled community learning and engagement, reaching 2000 participants through the ReefWatch, NatureWatch and Wild Families programs, and a wide range of other activities. The programs extended to a diverse range of community groups including culturally and linguistically diverse community groups, families with younger children, school children and young adults. Throughout the year the team adapted and placed increased emphasis on online platforms to engage the community for nature conservation purposes.
 - 1.4 **QUESTION & ANSWER:** Caitlin fielded questions & answers covering: likely changes resulting from the bush fire enquiries; the Mt Cole Grevillia being officially listed as critically endangered; and the age diversity of the VNPA community.
 - 1.5 **BUSH WALKING & ACTIVITIES GROUP REPORT 2019/2020, VNPA BWAG Convener: Terese Dalman** provided an update on the bush walking activities which included many activities in the first eight months of the year, prior to COVID-19 restrictions. The BWAG is exploring new techniques and ideas to enhance community engagement, and is preparing a member survey to assess strategy and direction. Terese thanked the dedicated volunteers for their important contributions as walk leaders, emergency contacts, leader mentors, excursion organisers, event coordinators and community members, and looks forward to recommencing activities in 2021.
2. **FORMAL PROCEEDINGS OF 68TH VNPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** The President Bruce McGregor opened the formal proceedings of VNPA's 68th AGM by outlining the agenda, announcing apologies and running a practice poll to familiarise participants with the Zoom chat & polling functionality.
 - 2.1 **Confirmation of the minutes of the 67th AGM 2018/19:** a copy of the 67th AGM minutes was circulated and is available on the VNPA website. MOTION 1: That the minutes of the 67th Annual General Meeting

of the VNPA be accepted as a true record on the meeting. Moved: Bruce McGregor Seconded: Michael Feller. Carried.

- 2.2 Adoption of the 2019/20 Annual Report:** a copy of the annual report was circulated to meeting attendees by email and is available on the VNPA website. Bruce noted the enormous challenges of the year including the fires, the pandemic and the restrictions that limited peoples' ability to get out into nature. On behalf of the Council and members Bruce thanked the Executive Director Matt Ruchel, the VNPA staff and volunteers for the effort, commitment and achievements throughout a very challenging year. Bruce also thanked members for their ongoing support and contribution. No Annual Report matters were raised at the AGM. MOTION 2: That the 2019-20 Annual Report of the VNPA be adopted. Moved: Bruce McGregor Seconded: Euan Moore. Carried.

Bruce noted that during the year the appointed auditor Coster Galgut Pty Ltd resigned, and Council informed and consulted the government regulator and then undertook a competitive tender to select a new auditor. MOTION 3: That the membership note the resignation of Coster Galgut Pty Ltd as VNPA auditor on 2 June 2020 and confirm Council's decision to appoint William Buck Audit (Vic) Pty Ltd as auditor of the account for the financial year ending 30 June 2020. Moved: Bruce McGregor Seconded: Marilyne Crestias. Carried.

- 2.3 Adoption of 2019/20 Audited Financial Statements:** a copy of the audited financial statements for 2019/20 was circulated to meeting attendees by email and is available on the VNPA website. Treasurer Marilyne Crestias noted the sound financial position and the small operational surplus achieved. Marilyne also noted the additional benefits of the COVID-19 related Government programs: Job Keeper & Cash Flow Boost. Marilyne noted that with COVID-19 impacts and the current recession, the Council acknowledges that we are entering uncertain times and therefore remains vigilant. MOTION 4: The Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2020 and the Auditor's Report prepared by William Buck be adopted. Moved: Marilyne Crestias. Seconded: Gerard McPhee. Carried.

- 2.4 Appointment of Auditor:** The accounts of the VNPA were audited by the chartered accountants William Buck and they are willing to be appointed as auditors for the 2020-21 financial year: MOTION 5: That William Buck Pty Ltd be appointed auditor of the accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 2021. Moved: Marilyne Crestias. Seconded: Michael Feller. Carried.

- 2.5 Election of 2020/21 Council – conducted by Executive Director:** Four existing Officer Holder positions and eight Councillor positions were declared vacant. Following the calling for nominations, four Office Holder nominations had been received:

- President – one nomination received: Dr Bruce McGregor
- Vice President – one nomination received: Gerard McPhee
- Treasurer - one nomination received: Marilyne Crestias
- Secretary – one nomination received: David Nugent

There being only one nomination to each of the Office Holder positions, the above nominees were declared elected as Office Holders for the 2020/21 year.

Eight nominations had been received for Councillor positions: Lara Bickford, Ann Birrell, Jan Brueggemeier, Michael Feller, Dianne Marshall, Paul Strickland, Rosemary Race, Doug Robinson.

In accordance with the rules of the Association all nominees were declared elected to VNPA Council for 2020/21.

- 2.6 Awarding of Honorary Life Memberships:** On behalf of the VNPA Council, Euan Moore awarded Honorary Life Membership for meritorious service to the VNPA to Lisa Sulinski and Rob Argent.

Lisa Sulinski Honorary Life Membership – Citation. Euan outlined Lisa's contributions to VNPA, as a member since 1994, an avid BWAG participant, leader & Committee Convener 2008 – 2011, and VNPA Council member 2010 – 2011. Lisa also helped develop and implement the Community Education and Engagement strategy and contributed to a variety of other programs including the Great Australian Bushwalk, engaging the culturally and linguistically diverse community group and the Wild Families program. Thank you Lisa for your outstanding contribution to the VNPA.

Rob Argent Honorary Life Membership – Citation. Euan outlined Rob's contributions to VNPA, as a member since 2003, a BWAG participant, leader & Committee member for 15 years. Rob also

contributed to the development and running of the highly successful leadership training for new leaders. Rob also shared his knowledge and experience in navigation through preparing and running navigation training courses. The materials developed by Rob remain an important asset for the VNPA. Thank you Rob for your outstanding contribution to the VNPA.

Lisa and Rob thank you for your outstanding contributions to the VNPA.

2.7 Retiring Council Members: Euan Moore and Deb Henry – The President acknowledged and thanked retiring Council members. Deb Henry particularly for her valuable contribution as a Council member for 7 years as well as her commitments as a bush walker and involvement in other activities. Euan Moore retiring from Council after an impressive and committed 10 years including time as Vice President & President.

The President noted that we are very fortunate that both Euan and Deb will continue to be involved in various VNPA committees and projects.

3. AGM Close: The President thanked staff for organising the AGM and members and non-members were thanked for their attendance and continued support for the VNPA. The 2020 AGM was declared closed at 8:30 pm.

ATTACHMENT: Attendance at VNPA's 68th AGM

138 members were present: Karen Alexander, Sue Appleby, Rob Argent, John Barrett, Lara Bickford, Timothy Brodrick, Jan Brueggemeier, Katie Butcher, Andy Calder, Russell Carrington, Elsie Carter, Robin Carter, Carol Challis, Bernadette Cheesman, Rebecca Chew, Jean Christie, Chris and Heather Close, Helen Cole, Karen Connolly, Russell Costello, Marilynne Crestias, Terese Dalman, John Deininger, Susan Donath, Malcolm Dow, Geoff Durham, Caroline Durré, Robert (Reg) Elder, Rachel Faggetter, Evelyn Feller, Michael Feller, Ian Ferguson, Peter Flanagan, Anna Foley, Michael Forster, Karen Garth, Fred Gerardson, Raymond Gibson, Janet Graham, Kellie Grattidge and Matthew Fagan, Ken Griffiths, Jasper Hails, Ric Halford, Tony Hampton, Simon Hay, Deb Henry, Alfred Heuperman, Maelor Himbury, Leigh Hogarty, Glenda Holmes and Ian MacBean, Michael and Dorothy Howes, Robyn Howson, Nick Hutton, Jennie Jaram, Robyn and Warren Jenkins, Stephanie Jones, Meredith Kefford, Effie Kene, Christine Kilmartin, Wilga Kottek, Markus Kubin, Larisa Kucan, Bruce Lavender, Lisa Lawrence, Barbara Lee, Bernie Mace, Rob Macindoe, Dianne Marshall, Hilary McAllister, Darren McClelland, Raimonne McCutchan, Bruce and Ann McGregor, David McLaren, Nicole McManus, Gerard McPhee, Steve Milton, Bette Mitchell, Hartley Mitchell, Euan Moore, Peter Moore, Marion Mortimer, Ivo Mueller, Harumi Nakayama, Greg Noonan, Rodney Novak, David Nugent, Martin O'Brien and Kaye Trainor, Sarah Patterson, Mark Perry, Anne Phefley, Stephen Platt, John Price, Rosemary Race, Philip Rayment, Carl Rayner, David Redfearn, John Renowden, Doug Robinson and Sally Mann, Jennifer Rolland, Karin Ruff, Miguel Shingu and Maria Sandoval, Isolde Scherrer, Brian Sharpley, Malcolm Shore, John and Merienne Shorridge, Deirdre and Bernard Slattery, Helen Sleigh, Heather Smith, Libby Smith, Heather Snell, Graeme Stone, Charles Street, Paul Strickland, Lisa Sulinski, Gillian Sullivan, Gary Summers, Wilson Swan, David Tatnall, Kelvin Thomson, Meryl Tobin, Margaret Hunter (Victorian Environmental Friends Network), Johanne Walker, Ann Wigglesworth, Nola Wilmot, Christopher Winfield, Colin Wong, Elizabeth Xipell.

Guests: Jim Phillipson.

Non-members present:

Staff in attendance: Sera Blair, Jessie Borrelle, Emily Clough, Jordan Crook, Caitlin Griffith, Shannon Hurley, Philip Ingamells, Charlotte Kandelaars, Nicole Mertens, Heath Rickard, Matt Ruchel, Meg Sobey

15 apologies were received: Andrew Arnold, Diane & John Baird, John Barkla & Alison Street, Ann Birrell, Emily Cameron, David C. Cheal, Ann Crawford, Glenn Osboldstone, Barrie & Diana Pittock, John and Ruth Stirling, Werribee River Association.