



VNPA Annual General Meeting 12 October 2021

6.30 - 8.30pm
Zoom Meeting

Minutes of the 69th AGM

1. **WELCOME AND OVERVIEW: President, Dr Bruce McGregor** opened the meeting at 6-30pm welcoming everyone to the 69th AGM managed via Zoom for the second year running; and by acknowledging the first people of the land on which the meeting was held. Bruce noted the agenda and associated materials were issued via email, *Park Watch* 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 function.
 - 1.1 **GUEST SPEAKER: Dr Philip Zylstra (Adjunct Professor at Curtin University)** presented his research which provides a basis for fire management that is founded on scientific research. Philip's findings are that:
 - i. Forests have natural ecological controls (e.g.: a naturally aging forests' propensity to self thin/self prune) that manage fire severity.
 - ii. Human intervention tends to interrupt these controls thereby making forests more susceptible to severe fires.
 - 1.2 **PROTECTING NATURE AND NATIONAL PARKS TOGETHER**

Matt Ruchel provided an update on the highlights for 2020/21 including:

1. Assisting the successful campaign to stop the AGL proposal to develop an LNG storage and off-point facility in Westernport Bay. The rejection of this proposal was a fantastic win for the environment.
2. Assisting the successful campaign for new Central West National Parks at Wombat-Lerderderg, Wellsford, Mt Cole/Mt Buangor and the Pyrenees, and a network of smaller reserves; and achieving a commitment from the Andrews Government to deliver these parks. Matt acknowledged that this commitment came with some strings attached and there is still important work required to ensure legislation is produced, tabled and passed before (or soon after) the November 2022 state election.
3. Working with local groups, particularly in East Gippsland, to produce a report assessing the implications of the fires, identifying the biodiversity needs and locations, identifying threatened species and subsequently identifying 10 refuge areas which contain high concentrations of threatened species habitat and/or threatened species. This report was fed into various government processes to communicate the importance of, and the need to protect the refuge/unburnt areas.
4. Working on an approach to protect Victoria's big trees which involves identifying the number and location of our big trees, how many are threatened by logging and defining approaches to protect these trees.
5. Developing a report assessing the Westernport Woodlands Corridor of Native Vegetation (between Lang Lang and Grantville) and identifying an important biolink.
6. Fighting the ongoing battles for improving protection and management of our parks and our seas and shores.

A broad and deep agenda of important work and Matt thanked our dedicated members, volunteers and staff for their tremendous and important contribution.

Elizabeth Morrison - Nature Conservation Officer and Australian Institute: Anne Kantor Young Women Environmentalists Fellow provided a summary on her journey to becoming involved in nature conservation and climate activism and her involvement with the VNPA via the Fellowship program.

Sera Blair - Acting Manager Community Learning and Engagement: provided a summary of the progress and achievements of the NatureWatch, ReefWatch, Wild Families & For Beginners programs, and shared some inspiring stories about engaging the community in meaningful nature conservation activities.

- 1.3 QUESTION & ANSWER:** Emily Clough fielded questions and answers covering: Elizabeth's key VNPA experiences; and, how the citizen-science "caught on camera" data-sets are used.
- 1.4 BUSH WALKING & ACTIVITIES GROUP REPORT 2020/2021, VNPA BWAG Convener: Terese Dalman** provided an update on the bush walking activities which were limited by the ongoing COVID restrictions. 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 2022.
- 2. FORMAL PROCEEDINGS OF 69TH VNPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** The President Bruce McGregor opened the formal proceedings of VNPA's 69th AGM by outlining the agenda, announcing apologies and familiarising participants with the Zoom chat and polling functionality.
- 2.1 Confirmation of the minutes of the 68th AGM 2019/20:** a copy of the 68th AGM minutes was circulated and made available on the VNPA website.
MOTION 1: That the minutes of the 68th Annual General Meeting of the VNPA be accepted as a true record on the meeting. Moved: Bruce McGregor Seconded: Dianne Marshall. Carried.
- 2.2 Adoption of the 2020/21 Annual Report:** a copy of the annual report was circulated to meeting attendees by email and made available on the VNPA website. Bruce noted the enormous challenges of the year, the outstanding dedication and performance of the VNPA team and tremendous 2020/21 achievements especially the success regarding the Central West National Parks and Westernport Bay. 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 the year. Bruce also thanked members for their ongoing support and contribution. No Annual Report matters were raised at the AGM.
MOTION 2: That the 2020-21 Annual Report of the VNPA be adopted. Moved: Bruce McGregor Seconded: Jan Brueggemeier. Carried.
- 2.3 Adoption of 2020/21 Audited Financial Statements:** a copy of the audited financial statements for 2020/21 was circulated to meeting attendees by email and is available on the VNPA website. Treasurer Marilyne Crestias noted the sound financial position and the operational surplus achieved. Marilyne also noted an increase in revenue from donors and supporters; the additional benefits of the COVID-19 related Government programs; a slight reduction in membership revenue; a slight increase in spending and a change in the accounting rules when accounting for specific donations.
MOTION 3: The Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 and the Auditor's Report prepared by William Buck be adopted. Moved: Marilyne Crestias. Seconded: Ann Birrell. Carried.
- 2.4 Appointment of Auditor:** The accounts of the VNPA were audited by the chartered accountants William Buck and their contract has expired. William Buck was not as responsive and collaborative as expected and Council is recommending members to appoint Accru as the auditor for 2021/2022. Note: Council reverted to last year's tender process to nominate Accru.
MOTION 4: That Accru be appointed auditor of the accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 2022. Moved: Marilyne Crestias. Seconded: Jan Brueggemeier. Carried.
- 2.5 Election of 2021/22 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: David Nugent
 - Treasurer - one nomination received: Marilyne Crestias
 - Secretary – one nomination received: Jan Brueggemeier
- There being only one nomination to each of the Office Holder positions, the above nominees were declared elected as Office Holders for the 2021/22 year.
- Eight nominations had been received for Councillor positions: Lara Bickford, Ann Birrell, Michael Feller, Dianne Marshall, Gerard McPhee, Paul Strickland, Rosemary Race, Doug Robinson.
- In accordance with the rules of the Association all nominees were declared elected to VNPA Council for 2021/22.

We share a vision of Victoria as a place with a diverse and healthy natural environment protected, respected and enjoyed by all.

2.6 Awarding of Honorary Life Memberships: On behalf of the VNPA Council, Ann Birrell awarded Honorary Life Membership for meritorious service to the VNPA to Euan Moore.

Euan Moore Honorary Life Membership – Citation. Ann Birrell summarised Euan’s distinguished contribution to VNPA, which includes: membership since 1986; Council member for 10 years; President for 3 years, Vice President for 2 years; Conservation and Campaigns Committee Convener and involvement in VNPA activities such as bushwalking, canoeing, cycling, nature restoration, bird watching, Wild Families and X-country skiing. Over many years, Euan has made a significant and valuable contribution to nature conservation. Euan and his partner Jenny Roland met through the VNPA and the VNPA also thanked Jenny for her support and contribution.

Thank you Euan for your outstanding contribution to the VNPA.

2.7 Other Business

Tribute: Ian Harris. Dianne Marshall outlined Ian’s contributions to nature conservation including: VNPA member since 1975; President 2001-2004; Vice President 2004-2006; management roles in the then Department of Conservation; management roles in the Environment Protection Authority; and his important involvement in long and successful campaigns such as establishment of the world’s first network of marine national parks, creation of national parks in Box Ironbark forests, the creation of an integrated Point Nepean national park and the end to alpine cattle grazing. Ian has left the world a better place and will be sadly missed.

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 2021 AGM was declared closed at 8:30 pm.

ATTACHMENT: Attendance at VNPA’s 69th AGM

140 Members were present:

See table 1 on page 4 below

7 Non-members/guests in attendance:

Dr Phillip Zylstra, Jill Redwood, Jim Phillipson, Lisa Gormley, Bruce & Elaine Henry, Aline Scott-Maxwell,

15 Staff in attendance:

Sera Blair, Jessie Borrelle, Emily Clough, Jordan Crook, Shannon Hurley, Philip Ingamells, Elizabeth Morison, Heath Rickard, Matt Ruchel, Meg Sobey, Rachel Nalliah, Lucy Permezel, Adrian Marshall, Simon O’Connor, Amelia Easdale

14 Apologies were received:

Karen Alexander OAM
Ann Crawford
Geoff Durham
Clifford & Betty Hayes
Ann Jacobs
Marilyn Ann Lock
Dinah McLean
Nicole Mertens
Kade Mills
Barrie & Diana Pittock
Brian Snape AM
Jane Stanley

Table 1: List of 140 members in attendance

Andrew	Arnold	John	Gregurke	Rhonda	Oliver
Lynn	Atkinson	John	Greig	Glenn	Osboldstone
Alison	Street	Ken	Griffiths	Gayle	Osborne
John	Barkla	Jasper & Carmel	Hails	Sue	Parkhill
John	Barrett	Mike	Hall	Catherine	Pitt
Joanne	Bechaz	Jane	Halliday	Stephen	Platt
Wendy	Bedggood	Tony	Hampton	Evelyn	Portek
Sue	Bendel	Mark	Harwood	Chris	Porter
Lara	Bickford	Ivan	Haustorfer	Carlota	Quinlan
Ann	Birrell	Frances	Hennessy	Rosemary	Race
Wendy	Boddison	Maelor	Himbury	Ray	Radford
Jane	Brownrigg	Michael	Howes	Philip	Rayment
Jan	Brueggemeier	Leonie	Hudson	Carl	Rayner
Rosalind	Byass	Nick	Hutton	John	Renowden
Robin	Carter	Robyn & Warren	Jenkins	David	Rhoderick
Wendy	Cartledge	Lindsay	Jolley	Doug	Robinson
Bernadette	Cheesman	Stephanie	Jones	Catherine	Roby
Rebecca	Chew	Cathy	Kiss	Jennifer	Rolland
Jean	Christie	Larysa	Kucan	Leigh	Rowe
Chris	Close	Geoff	Lacey	Karin	Ruff
Heather	Close	Jan	Lacey	Annie	Savage
Jann	Cooney	Glenda	Lasslett	Isolde	Scherer
Marilyne	Crestias	Lorraine	Le Plastrier	Anny	Shaw
Louise	Crisp	Bernie	Mace	Malcolm	Shore
Robin	Crocker	Dianne	Marshall	John	Shortridge
Terese	Dalman	Darren	McClelland	Andrea	Skinner
John	Deiningner	Janet	Mcconville	Deirdre & Bernard	Slattery
Nicole	Drever	Ann	McCoy	Andrew	Smalley
Chris	Dunn	Raimonne	McCutchan	Libby	Smith
Jean	Edwards	Bruce	McGregor	Heather	Snell
David	Edwards	Ruth	McKenzie	Trevor	Speirs
Dianne	Emslie	David	McLaren	Robert	Stephenson
Rachel	Faggetter	Nicole	McManus	Charles	Street
Evelyn	Feller	Rhonda	McNeil	Paul	Strickland
Michael	Feller	Catherine	McNicol	Elsbeth	Swan
Denise	Fernando	Gerard	McPhee	Wilson	Swan
Margaret	Finger	Steve	Milton	David	Tatnall
Peter	Flanagan	Bette	Mitchell	Hedley	Thomson
John	Forrester	Euan	Moore	Hartley	Tobin
Michael	Forster	Angela	Munro	Andrew	Tytherleigh
David	Fraser	Greg	Noonan	Rosemary	West
Robin	Gardner	Jenny	Norvick	Kevin	Whiting
Fred	Gerardson	Rodney	Novak	Allan	Wishart
Raymond	Gibson	David	Nugent	Elizabeth	Xipell
Janet	Graham	Kaye	O'Brien	Yvonne	Yendell
Glenys	Greenwood	Martin	Trainor		