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AGM MINUTES

VNPA Annual General Meeting

6.00 – 8.45pm 11 October 2022

Hybrid event:

- in person at Melbourne City Conference Centre, 190 Little Lonsdale St, Melbourne, 3000
- online via zoom meeting

6.00 pm: Pre-meeting drinks and canapés

(6.50 pm: Zoom meeting opens)

7.0 pm: Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country, Dr Bruce McGregor, VNPA Council President

Dr Bruce McGregor opened the meeting at 7pm welcoming everyone to the 70th AGM run hybridly with online (via Zoom) and in-person attendance. He began by acknowledging the first peoples 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.

- Including a short video showcase celebrating VNPA's achievements over 70 years.

Guest speaker: Dr Don Garden

- *Conservation Journeys*: A short history of VNPA - from 1952 until 2010.
Dr Garden reminded the audience that at the beginning of the organisation the majority of the member base were not formally trained naturalists (like Crosbie Morrison) and over time has seen more professionalisation (like professional scientists like Malcolm Calder joining the organisation)
- 1952-92 – first instalment of the VNPA's history takes the creation of Wilson Promontory National Park as the starting point. Dr Garden acknowledged the contributions of Crosbie Morrison and Ros Garnet in the early days of the organisation. This period also saw the National Parks Act become legislation (and establishment a National Parks Authority) as well as the 1969 Little Desert campaign. From there followed the creation of the Land Conservation Council and its current successor: the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council.
- 1992-2010 – in the second instalment by Dr Garden, we were reminded of the broader political and environmental circumstances under the Kennett government and the Millennium Drought. VNPA's focus shifted from working exclusively with government departments to engaging more community groups. Some campaign highlights mentioned were: Marine

National Parks, Box Iron Bark, Red Gum forests (Barmah National Park), cattle grazing in Alpine National Park.

Presentation: Protecting nature together

Matt Ruchel, Executive Director

- **New Central West**, campaign objective: Government commitment to national parks at Wombat-Lerderberg, Wellsford, Mt Cole/Mt Buangor and the Pyrenees, and a network of smaller reserves
- Campaign highlight: **Western Port Woodlands** Corridor of Native Vegetation in partnership with great number of local groups
- *Hands off parks!* campaign continues:
 - **Warburton bike tracks** (to protect cool temperate rainforest and the very rare species like the Donna Buang Wingless Stonefly)
 - **Planned Falls to Hotham Track Alpine Crossing** including a range of buildings on Diamantina Spur towards the summit of Mount Feathertop, which is extremely costly and could set a dangerous precedent for development in National Parks
 - **Grasslands in and around Melbourne** and the promised but not yet delivered *Western Grassland Reserves*; some areas were recently put under protection due successful campaigning by the *Grassy Plains Network*, hosted by VNPA, but more work needs to happen
- **Western Port Bay**: the Western Port plan as new framework to protect Western Port
- 20 years anniversary of **Marine National Parks** in Victoria, but currently we are trailing behind nationally with no new additions since 2002

Caitlin Griffith, Manager – Community Learning and Engagement

- Community engagement and citizens science contributing to 70s years of advocacy and cultivating love for nature
- Acknowledgement community engagement as extraordinary backbone of the organisation. This includes programmes and activities like Reef Watch (marine citizen science), Nature Watch (terrestrial citizen science), education activities, Wild Families and the Youth Team.
- Citizen science contributes to the monitoring of parks and it engages families and others in head-, heart-, and hands-on community learning
- It is an important part of volunteer led and driven activities at VNPA
- It offers Victorians the opportunity to experience to enjoy and connect with nature as well as provides resources to learn.
- Youth team initiative is a new initiative to engage youth
- Organisational change for BWAG: VNPA is currently transitioning to a staff coordinated and administered Bushwalking activities, which are led by volunteer activity leaders.
- Community events did take a hit during 2021/2 but did not completely cease like, for instance, Reef Watch did run in some capacity. Overall, over 2000 people participated in activities over the year.

8.00 pm: 70th AGM, Chaired by Dr Bruce McGregor, President

1. President's welcome and introduction

The President Bruce McGregor opened the formal proceedings of VNPA's 70th AGM by outlining the agenda and announcing apologies.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 69th AGM

Motion 1: To accept the 2021 minutes.

Moved: Bruce McGregor. Seconded: Carried

3. Adoption of the 2021-2022 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 campaign achievements, Phil Ingamel's retirement, the challenges of remote working during Covid, the review of the strategic plan, and the new initiative of a targeted youth program, and Ann Birrell becoming an honorary life-long member. 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 2021-22 Annual Report of the VNPA be adopted

Moved: Bruce McGregor. Seconded: Gerard McPhee - Carried

4. Adoption of the audited 2021-2022 Annual Financial Statements

A copy was circulated via email and available on website. Treasurer Marilyne Crestias noted that a modest operating surplus over last financial year, revenue from day-to-day operations has slightly increased (bequests and grants), membership revenue is down a bit. Interest revenue has gone down a bit due to low interest rates. Strong reserves guarantee financial security. Investment in Australian Ethical and other investments. New auditor, financial report layout has slightly changed.

Motion 3: 2021-2022 Financial Report to be adopted

Moved: Marilyne Crestias. Seconded: David Nugent – Carried

5. Appointment of the Auditor: Accru Melbourne

The accounts of the VNPA were audited by the chartered accountants Accru Melbourne and their contract has expired.

Motion 4: Accru Melbourne to be re-engaged for 2022/2023

(Moved Marilyne Crestias, seconded Dianne Marshall – Carried

6. Election of Council (see Agenda item 6, below)

1. President – one nomination received: David Nugent
2. Vice President – one nomination received: Lara Bickford
3. Treasurer - one nomination received: Marilyne Crestias
4. Secretary – Doug Robinson
5. Councillors (up to 8 positions) – Jan Hendrik Brueggemeier, Michael Feller, Chris Harvey, Dianne Marshall, Bruce McGregor, Gerard McPhee, Askin Morrison and Michael Young.
6. Note: retiring council members Rosemary Race and Paul Strickland

Welcoming words by the incoming President David Nugent thanking Bruce McGregor for his previous 4 years of being the president and retiring council members.

In accordance with the rules of the Association all nominees were declared elected to VNPA Council for 2022/23.

7. Awarding of Honorary Life Memberships

Ann Birrell Honorary Life Membership – Citation:

Gerard McPhee introduced Ann as new honorary life-long member of the VNPA. Ann comes from a bush walking family. She has been active on numerous causes like social justice and the environment. In 2010 she stood for The Greens Party. She joined VNPA after working for the Greens Party as a generous supporter and enthusiastic volunteer worker. Being a professional

lawyer, she joined the Governance, Policy and Legal committee of VNPA. In 2014 became the chair of the committee and provided valuable and far-sighted guidance and expertise to the organisation while participating on the ground in the many campaigns run by VNPA.

Thank you, Ann, for all your valuable work.

Chris Smythe Honorary Life Membership – Citation:

Dianne Marshall introduced **Chris Smythe** as new honorary life-long member of the VNPA. Chris grew up in the country but since then has always live close to the coast. Educated as a geography teacher, he got involved with marine policy and science communication early on in his life. Prior joining VNPA -- and inspired by Ralph Nader -- he directed a research project and authored a landmark report on coastal management in Victoria called *A Coastal Retreat*. He joined the VNPA in 2000 and became the marine campaigner. Among other accolades he received for his efforts are the Parks Victoria Volunteer Kookaburra award for his outstanding contribution to the extension of National Park system in Victoria as well as becoming an honorary research fellow of Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources & Security (University of Wollongong). Other professional experiences include campaign work for the Australian Conservation Foundation and starting his own consultancy. His contributions to VNPA include the editing of Park Watch, being the staff representative on VNPA committees, as well as numerous submission letters, policy briefings, conferences, and community liaison. His dedicated and hard work led to many wins, for instance, the creation of a system of marine national parks and reserve, which in 2002 became a world-first. He continuous to be instrumental to the VNPA campaign like Belfast Coastal Reserve one, which is on-going.

Thank you, Chris, for these outstanding contributions.

8. Other business

QnA:

- A question from the audience was posed about binding international commitments when it comes to the protection of the environment in Victoria
- A question from the audience was posed about aging memberbase demographics

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 8:45 pm.

Attendance and apologies at VNPA's 70th AGM – 11 Oct 2022

45 apologies were received

Barrie & Diana Pittock	Margaret Hattersley
Betty Vergara-Pink	Margaret Donald
Bushwalking Victoria Inc.	Mark Harwood
Carrillo Gantner	Megan Davis
Clodagh Norwood	Mick & Judy Lumb
Elvyne Hogan	Pamela Knight
Evelyn & Michael Feller	Paul Strickland
Glenn & Barbara Hilling	Rachel Nalliah
Janet Sowden	Rachel Faggetter
Janis Baker	Ric Pawsey
Jean Christie	Robert Campbell
Jessie Borrelle	Robin Crocker

John Barkla & Alison Street
Judy Walsh
Karyn Docking
Ken & Lyn Mawdsley
Lorraine Ratcliffe

Roger & Annabel Richards
Roger Brink
Roger N Douglas & Robin J Burns
Sera Blair
Dr Shirley Tolsher

14 non-members/guests in attendance:

Alison Watson
Lisa Gormley
David Neilson
Nes Ben Romdhane
Deb Henry
Peter Muhlebach
Don McGregor,
Judith Scott

Prue Thwaites,
John Hasler
Harriet Searcy
Sue McKerracher
Jude Bowman
Susan Bannerman
Julia Hamer
Prue Thwaites,

16 staff in attendance:

Adrian Marshall
Jacob L'Huillier Lunt
Amelia Easdale
Jordan Crook
Ben Gill
Kade Mills
Heath Rickard
Lucy Permezel

Matt Ruchel
Blake Nisbet
Nicole Mertens
Caitlin Griffith
Paul Clifton
Emily Clough
Shannon Hurley
Consuelo Quevedo

133 Members were present (91 in person, 43 online)

In person attendees (91 members):

Andrew Booth
Jenny Rolland
Andrew Smalley
John Barrett
Marjorie Barrett
Jane Crouch
Angela Munro
John Greig
Ann Birrell
John Kotsiaris
Ann Crawford
John Stirling
Ruth Stirling
Ann Wigglesworth
Julie Egan
Askin Morrison

David Tatnall
Michael Forster
Dianne Marshall
Michael Young
Don Garden
Mike Clarke
Elizabeth Xipell
Nicholas Cole
Elsie Carter
Nola Wilmot
Euan Moore
Peter Flanagan
Felicity Gordon
Phil Ingamells
Fred Gerardson
Ray Radford

Kelly Van
Bernie Mace
Liz Ninnes
Ken Griffiths
Bill McInnes
Libby Smith
Bonnie Gelman
Linden Gillbank
Bruce McGregor
Ann McGregor
Lisa Lawrence
Catherine Costello
Catherine McNicol
Malcolm Shore
Charlie Sherwin
Margaret Finger
Bill Finger
Chris Ashe
Marilyne Crestias
Chris Harvey
Mark Barnard
Consuelo Quevedo
Mary-Lou Baxter
Darren McClelland
Maureen Walker
David Cheal
Melissa Makarewitsch
David Nugent
Mem Alexander

Frederick Crump
Ros Savio
Gail FitzSimons
Paul FitzSimons
Russell Carrington
Geoff Durham
Russell Costello
Gerard McPhee
Sally Hayes
Graeme Stone
Jenny Stone
Sandra Brunner
Grahame Willis & Jane Perry
Stephen Platt
Greg Noonan
Stephen Webb
Hedley Thomson
Steve Milton
Karen Large
Isolde Scherrer
Sue Parkhill
James Thyer
Tim Brodrick
Jan Brueggemeier
Warwick Sprawson
Yasmin Kelsall
Jan Lacey
Wendy Radford
John Bardsley

Online attendees (43 members):

Adam Edmonds
John Garnet
Alfred & Maaartje Heuperman
Julie Kidd
Alison Agar
Karen Alexander
Andrew Arnold
Ben Gunn
Lara Bickford
Annie Preston
Larysa Kucan
Bernadette Cheesman
Louise Mitchell
Celia Smith
Mark Learmonth
Charles Street
Meryl Tobin,

Peter Lemon
Chris Smyth
Phil Rayment
Christine Kilmartin
Prof. John Langford
Colin Stokes
Raymond Gibson
David Redfearn
Reg Elder
Dianne Emslie
Rod Novak
Doug Robinson
Rosemary Race
Els Meeusen
Rowan Berry
Elspeth Swan
Sheina Nicholls

Hartley Tobin
Chris Close
Terese Dalman
Evelyn Portek
Thomas Gengenbach, Karin Ruff

Stephanie Jones
Ferdoushy Begum (Dandenong Valley
Bushwalking Club Inc.)