

New South Wales Wildlife Council, Inc.

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'achieving optimal outcomes for Australian wildlife'

21 December 2009

Dear NSW Wildlife Council Member,

NSW WILDLIFE COUNCIL – PROPOSED CHANGES

As a member of the NSW Wildlife Council (NWC) I am keen to let you know the main outcomes of the NWC committee meeting on 17 December 2009 that discussed possible changes to the NWC constitution to make the Council more effective. You may be aware that over the last few months the NWC has been concerned about our inability to gather enough members together to formally hold meetings. This year the NWC lacked a quorum at two of its general meetings and the planned AGM had to be postponed due to a lack of likely attendees.

At the committee meeting the suggestions put forward by a number of NWC members and their representatives were discussed. The options canvassed included having a committee only structure rather than a Council, or a Board of Directors supported by a paid CEO should the funds become available. However there was not a broad consensus for radical change and the committee agreed to maintain the current Council model. In order to overcome the problem of not having a quorum to conduct business it is recommended that the NWC adopt a quorum of 7 members, 3 of which must be members of the Executive – all members must be present, i.e. a proxy voter or teleconferencing member will not make up part of the quorum. Currently there is a need for more than 50% of members to be present at meetings, but this has proved to be unreasonably high compared to the norm. Even though it is proposed that the NWC move towards a smaller quorum, all members are encouraged to be represented at meetings.

Several other ideas were discussed to make the Council more effective, including:

- The need to 'encourage' attendance through the introduction of a membership fee was not agreed;
- All members would be treated equally regardless as to their level of contribution;
- Continue with the current voting system rather than move to another model;

- Look more closely at using volunteers within the broader membership to take on tasks should they want to help out;
- Give greater authority to office bearers to conduct routine business;
- Move the AGM to a quieter period of the year - late August;
- There was not a strong case to change the day on which the Council meets. It is hoped member groups can select representatives who can attend meetings.
- The suggestion to hold meetings elsewhere in the State was not agreed;
- The possibility of employing a paid secretary, should funds become available, would be looked at in the future; and
- There is a need to focus on key strategic issues rather than trying to deal with every wildlife situation that arises.

Since its inception the NWC has become very effective in influencing NSW wildlife policies and associated issues. The NWC is now the first port of call for Government and non-Government agencies to obtain advice. The minimum standards work, suggested changes to wildlife management policies and the access gained to Ministers and senior Departmental staff are indicative of our growing reputation. However it is vital for our continued success that all groups are represented and contribute to the overall effort, including attendance at meetings.

The minutes of the committee meeting will be forwarded to your representatives soon and will be posted on the NWC website. The proposed changes to the NWC constitution will be presented at a Special General Meeting on 24 March 2010 - an AGM and general meeting will be held on the same day.

Thank you for your continuing support and have a great Christmas break.

Yours sincerely

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Copy to:
NWC representatives (via email)