



Australian Conservation Foundation Inc.

ABN 22 007 498 482

51st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 6.00pm on Friday 24 November 2017 at Victoria University Convention Centre, Flinders Street, Melbourne

MINUTES

1. OPENING OF MEETING

The President, Geoff Cousins opened the meeting, welcoming ACF members, Honorary Life Members and Life Members, including those members who are, for the first time watching a live stream of this AGM through our website. The President also welcomed staff, Board members, Councillors, and special guests Marnie Rawlinson, 2016 Peter Rawlinson Conservation Award winner Ed Hill, award nominator Amelia Young and Wurundjeri Elder, Ron Jones.

2. WELCOME TO COUNTRY

We were honoured to have Ron Jones, an Elder of the Wurundjeri Land Council, attend to provide a formal welcome to country. Ron welcomed members and guests to his ancestors' country, providing a brief history of his people and the importance of the land around this meeting.

2. ATTENDANCE

Attendance was as registered on entry to the meeting. The President noted that over 80 ACF members had registered their attendance shortly before the opening of the meeting, exceeding the requirement of a quorum of 50 members present.

The President advised that apologies had been received from 45 members and that a list of apologies was available for viewing at the registration desk.

Three proxies for this meeting were submitted by the deadline of 5.00pm on Thursday 23 November 2017. All were assigned to the Hon. Secretary who, being an apology for this meeting, had assigned the proxies to Vice President, Nadia McLaren.

3. MINUTES OF 50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was moved "That the Minutes of the 50th Annual General Meeting be confirmed."

Proposed: David Morris
Seconded: Piers Verstegen

The motion was carried.

4. BUSINESS ARISING

The President noted that there was no business arising from the minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President, Geoff Cousins, gave his final report to members as ACF President.

The President spoke about the state of our country, of our natural world and our political world. Of a barely functioning government and parliament, a leadership vacuum on the environment trying to turn the clock back on the meagre advances made.

Where there is a vacuum, there is an opportunity to move in, and this is what ACF has done. During the past three years, ACF supporter numbers have increased from around 100,000 to 500,000. We have seen people turning away from politicians who are self-serving. We have seen changes where pressure is applied. ACF is harnessing the power of the people to conduct powerful on the ground campaigns, such as Adani. Not since the campaign to Save the Franklin have we seen Australians unite around a single threat – the proposed Adani coal mine - and the idea of a clean energy future, a safe climate and a Great Barrier Reef that thrives throughout the ages.

This has been a time of enormous strengthening of ACF, not only in supporter numbers and not just in financial position – although there is great strength there. It is particularly in the past year that creativity and innovation have reached a new and high level. This has included being behind major media pieces and investigative journalism. Our campaigning impact is growing, and our staff satisfaction levels are growing. Every metric is on the rise. It is very exciting that ACF is in the right place to take a leadership role and seize new and innovative opportunities to achieve real impact.

The President finished by thanking the Board and Council for their significant contribution to the organisation and acknowledged the outstanding performance of ACF's CEO and her exceptional team.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The CEO, Kelly O'Shanassy, joined with Geoff in thanking ACF members and supporters for the incredible year, and provided the following report to members.

People power in the extraordinary Stop Adani campaign has meant action on a daily basis including:

- A phone call from a supporter to the Prime Minister's office every 5 minutes for 6 weeks;
- Regular local group actions outside Minister Frydenberg's electorate office;
- Community actions in Queensland, including at every press conference in the lead up to the Queensland election.

The CEO asked members if they could have imagined a few years ago that energy companies would be on the frontline calling for the closure of coal. Or that banks would state they will not invest in Adani or any new coal power station in Australia. Or Unions would call for the closure of coal and a just transition for workers. Not only for the 1 million jobs that are identified through joint research with ACF, but because coal is dirty and dangerous and fuels global warming.

The CEO explained that this is what we mean by Changing the Story. In addition to building People Power, ACF needs to reach the hearts and minds of Australians on the things we care about. It was understandable that members may have felt great sorrow – perhaps for a moment felt like giving up – on news that pollution in Australia is rising, and on the catastrophic loss of half of the Great Barrier Reef. The CEO encouraged members to remember that once it begins, change happens faster than can be imagined.

The CEO suggested that members be reassured and encouraged by:

- The coal plants that are closing – and the solar and wind farms and battery systems that take their place;
- 40,000 people saying “no way Jay” and stopping a toxic nuclear industry for South Australia;
- The Wuthathi people of Cape York and their four decade struggle for their land to be rightfully returned to them along the beautiful Shellburne Bay;
- The Murray-Darling Rivers and the decades of work to get water returned to them. The CEO noted her pride in the communities that ACF empowered this year to speak up and expose the water theft and corruption that has invaded our elected officials and decision-makers;
- The Great Forest National Park, a campaign not yet quite won, but almost there.

There is so much ACF has done - please read our annual report. The CEO acknowledged that none of it would be possible without our supporters and thanked them for their hope and action and energy and voices.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Mary Latham, reported on the financial position of ACF as reflected in the Annual Financial Report for year ended 30 June 2017.

ACF's continues to maintain a sound financial base upon which to operate, having an asset base of \$18.1 million, comprising the 60L Green Building (\$9.25M) in Melbourne, plus a portfolio of ethical investments.

It has been a terrific year financially. Income grew to \$13.3 million, with \$11.4 million contributed by our members and supporters, through bequests, cash appeals, major gifts, membership and our EarthVoice regular giving program, and the remainder from members, grants, investment and 60L building rental income.

ACF would like to thank all our donors and members. Your generous contributions exceeded our expectations and enabled us to deliver a surplus of \$1.09 million. Your Board has used this surplus to create an Environmental Impact Fund which will support additional environmental work over the coming months and years. The Board looks forward to hearing from the CEO and Executive team, as to what they propose to spend these funds on.

The cost of Fundraising continues to increase across the charitable sector. Our fundraising team is increasingly using new technology such as social media to reach more potential donors. This will help drive down costs.

ACF spent the majority of the funds its raised on the environment actions that Geoff and Kelly have outlined. Last year over half our total expenditure was directly invested in our environmental programs, as we seek to deliver a clean energy future, protect our lands and rivers and change a system that is failing to protect our environment. However, to maintain our financial independence, we must invest in fundraising from donors like you. Last year, for every \$1 invested, we raised \$2.40 to spend on our environment. Remaining expenditure is on essential administration through tightly managed costs and budgets, and on operating the 60L building.

The Treasurer thanked Director of Finance and Operations, Anthony Moore, and the finance team, ACF staff and the voluntary members of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee for their hard work during the past year.

The Chair then asked for any questions from members on the financial report.

Questions:

The Treasurer was asked if ACF has continued the discipline of paying its own rent for its office in the 60L building.

The Treasurer responded that although ACF continues to treat itself as a tenant, ACF no longer pays itself rent. The President noted that the Board agreed to discontinue this internal practice.

The President then thanked the Treasurer for her efforts as Chair of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee. There being no further questions:

It was moved "That the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2017 be received and accepted."

Proposed: Piers Verstegen
Seconded: David Hood

The motion was carried.

8. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

The Treasurer thanked the external auditors, Grant Thornton, for their work in undertaking the audit of the 2016-17 Financial Statements.

It was moved "That Grant Thornton be re-elected external auditors for the coming year."

Proposed: Jimmy Cocking
Seconded: Sue Richardson

The motion was carried.

DISCLOSURE OF BOARD MEMBER'S INTEREST

The Treasurer noted that a member of the ACF Board had declared an interest to the Board and members, in accordance with Rule 65 of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT). Further details were made available to members at the meeting.

9. PRESENTATION OF THE PETER RAWLINSON CONSERVATION AWARD

Councillor Daisy Barham, member of the award panel, introduced the Award:

Community created ACF and our community powers us today, through people standing up, speaking out and doing great things to care for this beautiful, unique place in which we live. Peter Rawlinson was one of those people. The Peter Rawlinson Conservation Award is named after a person who made his own outstanding contribution caring for our unique natural environment and wildlife. Peter was a compelling voice on many conservation issues and an active contributor to ACF as a councillor (from 1983 - 1991), Vice President (from 1983 - 1986) and Treasurer (from 1986 - 1991). During Peter's life, he helped and encouraged many people and groups to advocate for their local environment.

After Peter's death in 1991, his wife Marnie started the award to honour his memory and recognise outstanding people volunteering at the local or national level who continue to care for our beautiful environment.

Marnie Rawlinson thanked the award panel for their time and commitment, and thanked all nominators and referees for their submissions.

The 2017 Peter Rawlinson Conservation Award was presented to two outstanding nominees:

The Goongerah Environment Centre (GECO) – awarded for the critical citizen science and on-ground surveying work of its volunteers to protect old growth trees and rainforest plants in East Gippsland forests.

Andrew Lincoln – awarded for the countless volunteer hours he has spent documenting rare and endangered wildlife in tracts of threatened forests in Victoria’s Central Highlands and East Gippsland, for organisations including GECO.

Ed Hill of the Goongerah Environment Centre accepted the awards for GECO and on behalf of Andrew Lincoln, who was unable to be present.

10. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

The President then invited questions from the floor, receiving a range of questions from members relating to the work of the past year and to future challenges.

- Several questions related to the future of coal-fired power stations, the transition to renewable energy and, in particular, elements and future strategies of the Stop Adani campaign.
- A member enquired about ACF’s role relating to Queensland land clearing, and was advised that The Wilderness Society and WWF were taking the lead role on this campaign.
- In response to a question on direct partnerships with Traditional Owners, the President advised that ACF is looking at how we collaborate with local Indigenous communities on our campaigns to achieve the best results for nature and Indigenous rights.

11. FAREWELL TO OUTGOING PRESIDENT, GEOFF COUSINS

Vice Presidents Nadia McLaren and Piers Verstegen thanked Geoff Cousins for his outstanding contribution to the organisation as President and Chair of Council and the Board from 2014 to 2017. Geoff has guided ACF through a time of enormous change and revitalisation. His strong leadership has been greatly appreciated by the Board, Council, CEO and staff, and members and supporters of the organisation.

12. MEETING CLOSED

There being no further business, the President declared the 51st Annual General Meeting closed and invited members and guests to move to the foyer for light refreshments.

2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ATTENDANCE

Jess Abrahams	Gabriella Hont	Anne Poelina
Roberta Atherton	David Hood	Henry Post
Barbara Baird	Graeme Hosken	Cheryl Pultz
Lauren Baird	Lester Irving	Marnie Rawlinson
April Baragwanath	Will Irving	John Renowden
Daisy Barham	John Iser	Sue Richardson
Christian Bell	Mallory James	Jenny Rickards
Bryan Beresford-Smith	Chris Jolly	Jill Rischbieth
Mark Betts	Ron Jones	Nicola Rivers
Jane Brownrigg	Eve Kantor	Philippa Rowland
Jenni Burton	Jonathan King	Nicole Sanderson
Timothy Chapman	Thomas Kinsman	Jess Sandral
Peter Christoff	Thomas Knowles	Michelle Sgro
Laura Clelland	Upeka Kumarasinghe	Robert Shanks
Jimmy Cocking	Jan Lacey	Daniel Simons
Jean Corbett	Mary Latham	Paul Sinclair
Geoffrey Cousins	Jim Le Cornu	Jane Smithers
Jane Crouch	Jane Macaulay	Margaret Steadman
Emily Fabian	Gavan McFadzean	David Stimson
Peter Falconer	Elizabeth McKinnon	Diana Svendsen
Felicity Farmer	Nadia McLaren	Dave Sweeney
Elsbeth Ferguson	Sara McMillan	Michael Tingay
Peter Flanagan	Jonathan Miller	Paul Varghese
Warwick Foot	Anthony Moore	Piers Verstegen
Rebecca Gardiner	Damien Morgan	Robert Welsh
Stuart Garratt	David Morris	Nicholas White
Phillip Geschke	Peter Mulherin	Noel Will
Douglas Gimesy	Tony O'Connor	Lisa Williams
Robert Gordon	Susie Orpen	Nola Wilmot
Sophie Green	Kelly O'Shanassy	Mark Wootton
Anne Hasegawa	Nick Pastalatzis	Geoffrey Wratten
Ed Hill	Ian Penrose	Amelia Young
Maelor Himbury	Sharron Pfueller	
Annelie Holden	Patricia Phair	

2017 PROXIES APPOINTED BY

Judy Lambert
Colin Goad
Howard Foster

2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING APOLOGIES

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh	Jennifer Morgan-Nicholson
Jon Anstey	Kitty Muntz
Linden Ashcroft	Peter Newman
Erika Avellaneda	Jonathan Nicholls
Monica Bynes	Winifred O'Brien
Samara Cassar	Ewan Ogilvy
Ian Colledge	Elizabeth Ollquist
Jonathan de B Persse	Ross Ollquist
David de Kretser	Peter Poland
Bruce Dymock	Cameron Power
Bronwen Evans	Geoff Poynter
Peter Fensham	Marie Renowden
Christine Fensham	David Shelmerdine
Penelope Figgis AO	Joan Sims
Barbara Hardy	Josephine Skellern
Will Harper	Geoffrey Smith
William Howard	Robin Taylor
Patsy Jones	Pamela Thomas
Peter Lake	Loma Toohey
Geoff Lane	Suzanne Turner
Elizabeth Law-Smith	Ross Tzannes
Margaret Lee	Suzanne Tzannes
Mary Lester	Michael Williams
Fraser McPhail	Mal Worswick