



DRAFT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES SATURDAY, 20 MARCH 2021

ATTENDANCE

1. PRESENT

Ceri Pearce, Renee Cassels, Keith and Lindsay Fisher, Sandra Christensen, Tom Collis, Dominic Chaplin, Wayne and Renee Young, Graham Harrington, Ray Pierce, Gary Wilson, Mikey Kudo, John Frois, Alistair and Amanda Freeman, Helen and Jeff Larson, Kris Mills, Terry Charmicael, Murray, Claire, and family, Lynette Ensor, and +10 others.

2. APOLOGIES

Geoff Stapley, Laurie Jones, Phillipa Cannon, Peter Valentine, Del Richards, Kath and Dave Shurcliff, Golo Maurer, Lorraine Lane

PROCEEDINGS

1. WELCOME, ATTENDANCE, AND APOLOGIES

- Meeting held at Cominos House, Cairns was declared open at 3:18pm by Ceri Pearce.
- Meeting attendance and apologies taken (Secretary).

2. MINUTES OF 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- Ceri Pearce opened the floor to questions and comments on 2020 Annual General Meeting minutes.
- No questions or comments received.
- VOTE: Wayne Young moved to accept the 2020 Annual General Meeting minutes, seconded by Gary Wilson, unanimously accepted.

3. CONVENORS REPORT

- 2020 Convenors Report (attached) prepared and presented by Ceri Pearce.
- VOTE: Wayne Young moved to accept the 2020 Convenor's Report, seconded by Lindsay Fisher, unanimously accepted.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

- The 2020 Treasurer's Report was prepared and presented by Lindsay Fisher, Treasurer.
- Members were asked to review and accept the report on our financial situation as of 31 December 2020.
- VOTE: Ceri Pearce moved to accept 2020 Treasurer's Report, seconded by Wayne Young, unanimously accepted.

5. OFFICE-BEARER ELECTIONS

- Wayne Young dismissed the Committee. All positions were declared vacant, and nominations received.
- The following Office-bearers were elected, with only one nomination received per position:
 - Convenor – Ceri Pearce
 - Deputy Convenor – Vacant
 - Secretary – Renée Cassels
 - Treasurer – Lindsay Fisher

6. COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

- The following Committee members were nominated and accepted:
 - Cairns Area Coordinator – Mikey Kudo
 - Tablelands Area Coordinator – Vacant
 - Cape York Area Coordinator – Kath Shurcliff
 - Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator – Sandra Christensen
 - Stickybeak Coordinator – Golo Maurer
 - Conservation Officer – Kath Shurcliff
 - Project Technical Support – Ray Pierce
 - Grasswren Project Leader – Kath Shurcliff and Graham Harrington
 - Website Manager – Mikey Kudo (temporary until new website launch)
 - Newsletter Editor – Ceri Pearce (temporary until replacement)
 - KBA Coordinator – Kath Shurcliff and Ray Pierce
 - Committee Member – Peter Valentine
 - Committee member – Doug Herrington

7. UPCOMING EVENTS

- Gary Wilson has booked 5 sites for ANZAC Day long weekend at Pinnarendi Station near 40 Mile Scrub.
- Gary Wilson is hosting a 'Introduction to Bird Photography' event on Saturday, 17 April at Cominos House.
- EcoFiesta is currently scheduled for Sunday, 13 June 2020 (Ceri Pearce).

8. MEETING CLOSE

- Meeting closed by Ceri Pearce at 3:05 pm.
- Meeting preceded by a presentation on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area by Terry Carmichael from the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Renée Cassels.

Convenor's Report, AGM 20th March, 2021.

As you are all aware, the last 12 months has been incredibly challenging with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting many aspects of our lives. After Queensland's equivalent of a lockdown, we gradually reintroduced outdoor activities in line with Queensland's COVID-19 restrictions and continue to do so. And if the recent meetings, presentations and outings in Cairns are an indicator, thanks to Cairns Area Coordinator Mikey Kudo, then we are finally settling back to normal. The recent Wave the Waders Goodbye event was very well attended, the presentations excellent and informative, and we were rewarded with views of the Nordmann's Greenshank, amongst other migratory waders that were colouring up. It is really hard to beat that.

We currently have 200 active BirdLife Australia members within our branch, and there are around 134 supporters (donors etc.) who have chosen to opt in and maintain contact with our branch.

Your committee successfully adopted the use of 'Zoom' to video conference and that allowed us to continue to regularly work together and make progress. Given the distance BirdLife Northern Queensland covers, and our spread of committee members, some over 400km apart, 'Zoom' is likely to become a regular tool we can use to maintain contact.

With some modifications to accommodate COVID-19 requirements, our Branch has continued to deliver a number of monitoring and conservation projects including the following:

- The annual Crane Count on the Tablelands and beyond, thanks to David and Margaret Merrall. BNQ annual crane counts commenced in 1997, and recently, a paper analyzing the first 21 years' worth of data has been published by Elinor Scambler, Tim Nevard, Graham Harrington, Ceinwen Edwards, Virginia Simmonds and Don Franklin. The paper highlighted the importance of the Atherton Tableland Key Biodiversity Area, which seasonally holds around 19.5% of the global non-breeding population of Sarus Cranes and just under 5% of the global non-breeding Brolga population. These research insights were possible because of the incredible team effort over many years by members and volunteers who undertook the surveys, so a big shout out THANK YOU to everyone involved.
 - David Merrill has now retired from the role of crane count survey coordinator. I wish to thank him sincerely for his adept organization and management of the surveys. We are currently seeking a new crane count coordinator. David is happy to provide guidance, especially for the upcoming 25th annual crane count in September 2021. If you live on the Tablelands and are interested, please do give me a call.
- Thanks to the leadership of Kath Shurcliff and the grasswren support team, our strong partnership with Southern Gulf Natural Resource Management continues. Southern Gulf NRM is working with pastoralists to promote uptake of grasswren friendly fire management practises. BNQ contributes by monitoring the grasswren populations in the region and in response to the fire regimes. Grasswren surveys in the Mount Isa area (led by Kath Shurcliff) were completed by a small, dedicated team in November 2020. Kalkadoon Grasswrens were detected in the most north-

westerly location found so far, and there was evidence of recent successful breeding there.

- The Queensland Gouldian Finch Project with the North Queensland Naturalist Group (led by Ray Pierce) has also had to adapt to meet COVID and biosecurity requirements to protect our volunteers and the properties and property residents they visit. Surveys are continuing. Gouldian finch populations, feeding observations and breeding activity are being monitored.
- Torresian Imperial Pigeon surveys including our annual synchronized coastal count in November were successfully completed under the leadership of Julia Hazel.
- Ongoing monitoring of Golden and Tooth-billed Bowerbirds was undertaken, particularly by project leader Dominic Chaplin - who explored a number of remote locations in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and adjacent ranges in search of the birds and their bowers.
- The Threatened Coastal Birds Project (migratory waders and Beach Stone Curlew) continues under the leadership of Paul Fisk, Sally Sheldon and Amanda Freeman. See the latest Contact Call for the last project update.
- Monthly surveys of the seasonal wetland at Hasties Swamp near Atherton, have continued under the leadership of Ron Schweitzer. This monitoring continues our long relationship with the wetland since the Branches early work to raise funds (including grant funding) to build the bird hide and install interpretative signage (circa 1998 onwards).
- A dedicated group of local birders under the leadership of Sandra Christensen (Cassowary Coast Area Coordinator) resumed regular monthly social outings/monitoring at Warrina Lakes, Innisfail after a COVID closure of the parkland. These monthly outings are starting to paint a picture of the resident and migratory bird species that use the parkland and highlight the areas importance for local bird conservation.

Several of our members have been working throughout the year on a number of issues, e.g., with Cairns Regional Council on the Esplanade and Jack Barnes Boardwalk, and with Mareeba Shire Council on access to Quaid Dam and Abbatoir Swamp, so a big thank you to Peter Valentine, Paul Fisk, Denis Walls, Mikey Kudo, and Lindsay and Keith Fisher. Helen Larson continues to be our BNQ representative in the Cassowary Recovery Team.

We have received some very positive feedback in relation to the Branch newsletter, Contact Call, which has continued to be 4 times a year in electronic form. Special thanks to our Assistant Editor Gary Wilson, who continues to gather interesting and informative articles, and write for the newsletter as well. The newsletter continues to capture a thorough record of our activities. Please don't hesitate to review past editions for a comprehensive overview of branch activities. You can find them on our website <https://birdlifeq.org/>

Maintaining communication with our members across the vast BirdLife Northern Queensland region relies on a team of volunteers. I'd also like acknowledge the valuable work of Doug Herrington (Facebook manager), Mikey Kudo (website manager) and Renee Cassells (secretary and email manager extraordinaire).

Our finances remain healthy and are well managed thanks to our Treasurer, Lindsay Fisher.

We were able to award a \$1500 Graham Harrington Research Scholarship to Nigel Jackett for his PhD project on Northern Masked Owls in 2020.

Wayne Young is retiring as a committee member this year. Wayne has contributed in multiple ways; he has organized special events, managed enquiries, and provided sage advice on a wide variety of issues. Both he and Ren also created that stunning handcrafted grazing board with the image of the pitta, that was the prize in our survey competition last year. Many thanks Wayne (and Ren). You will be missed.

THANK YOU ALL for helping us achieve these milestones in what has been a difficult 12 months.

Ceri Pearce 19/03/2021.

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