

National Parks & Wildlife Advisory Council

Meeting summary 27 May 2020

The Council provides the Minister for Energy and Environment and the NPWS executive with independent, informed advice on a wide range of issues impacting national parks.

To comply with COVID-19 restrictions, the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council held its 27 May meeting online.



Advisory Council members and staff engaged in the group's first online meeting

NPWS Executive Director Park Programs Robert Quirk updated Council on NPWS priorities including:

- The agency's **response to COVID-19** and recent easing of restrictions including the reopening of camping in national parks
- NPWS **fire management** including the agency's contribution to the overall firefighting effort during 2019-20, lessons learned and hazard reduction
- Progress of **post-fire pest control programs**
- NPWS' role as an active partner in the **Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct**.

Council members shared their personal stories of the impact of drought, bushfire and COVID-19 on their communities and networks.

NPWS staff updated Council on impact, response and recovery from bushfires and COVID-19 with a focus on initial lessons learned. Discussion focussed on:

- NPWS role and work with the EES COVID-Bushfire Taskforce
- Fire impact and assessment of affected Aboriginal cultural heritage sites
- Major fire recovery wildlife rehabilitation projects
- The nature and severity of fire impacts on the South Coast Branch reserves, staff and community
- The impacts of COVID-19 restrictions on park visitation
- The challenges involved in inspecting, assessing and repairing or replacing more than \$100 million of fire damaged park infrastructure across NSW
- The significant impact of COVID-19 on 191 NPWS tourism lessees
- Current post-fire recovery wild horse control program targeting three areas in the northern part of Kosciuszko National Park
- Potential impacts of the Snowy 2.0 project on the park.

Plans of Management

An update was provided on plans of management for NPWS reserves due for public exhibition during 2020.

For Further information

If you require further information on any matters in this summary please contact npws.advisorycouncil@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Council members

Assoc Prof Tracey J Dickson

(Chair): Expertise and experience in ecotourism or the sustainable visitor or tourist use, enjoyment and appreciation of reserves

Dr Kevin Mills (Deputy Chair): National Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Advisory Committee member

Assoc Prof Rosemary Black:

Expertise and experience in environmental education and community involvement in environmental education

Mr Brian Everingham: Expertise in non-government organisations concerned with the conservation of nature, nominated by the NSW National Parks Association

Cr Phyllis Miller OAM: Experience in planning and local government, nominated by Local Government NSW

Assoc Prof Julie Old: Scientific qualifications in an area associated with the conservation of nature

Ms Cathy Parsons: Expertise and experience in bush fire management

Ms Bronwyn Petrie: Expertise and experience in agriculture and rural issues, nominated by the NSW Farmers' Association

Mr Ted Rowley: Expertise and experience in rural and regional development and planning issues

Mrs Marie Russell AM: National Parks and Wildlife Service Regional Advisory Committee member

Mr Craig Thomas: Representing peak recreational bodies

Ms Dianne Thompson OAM: Expertise in non-government organisations concerned with the conservation of nature, nominated by the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales

Ms Iris White: Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee member