

**New South Wales Speleological Council Executive**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday – 18th August 2021**

**7 PM Zoom Video Conference**

**Meeting opened:** 7:20 pm

1. **Attendance:**

Rod Smith, Lachlan Bailey, Keir Vaughn-Taylor, Stephanie Murphy, Glenn Stalgis, Peter Dykes

1. Business Arising from previous minutes
   1. Response to Yarrangobilly Precinct Proposal – Lachlan  
      Hoping for input from us, send it through
2. Reports
   1. JSRG (Jenolan Caves Stakeholder Reference Group)  
      Stephanie – The first meeting was held on the 21st of July 2021. The meeting mostly consisted of going through the MUO. The project is made up of the following components:  
       Visitor Facilities Upgrade  
       Visitor Centre  
       Blue Lake Boardwalk  
       Blue Lake De-sedimentation (post flood)  
       Caves House  
       Caves House Refurbishment  
      There are associated works that could overlap or influence the above. These are:  
       Electrical  
       Caves House Generator Upgrade  
       Bushfire Power Restoration  
       Rockfall & Landslide Management  
       Blue Lake Rockfall Barriers  
       Grand Arch rockfall Barriers  
       Devils Coach House Rockfall Modelling  
       Precinct  
       Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve Masterplan  
       Mountain Lodge Refurbishment  
       Flood 2021  
       Hydro Dam De-sedimentation  
       Culverts Repair/Replacement  
      The discussions are starting with the Blue Lake boardwalk. Information they give can be shared with this group unless they specifically say otherwise.  
      Peter – Based on a conversation with Barry Richards, who is a landowner and resident near Jenolan, advised the following in regards to the roads into Jenolan. The Department of Transport are in charge and in no hurry. Current estimates are that the 5 mile (access from Hampton) will not be open until 2024 at the earliest. They are initially going to focus on the section of road between the number 1 and number 2 carparks. This work may start later this year, but is more likely to start next year.  
      Rod – Since we represent NSW clubs and NSW cavers anything that can be shared with us should be able to be shared with the rest of NSW cavers  
      Keir – Have you been given maps?  
      Stephanie – No, just a booklet. Although I haven’t had time to look at what is in the booklet.  
      Keir – Bruce received the maps and I can forward them to the Exec  
      Stephanie – Do we have a central storage for documents like these?  
      Lachlan – The email address I setup is on Google, so it includes space to store documents  
      Peter – I print documents and keep them as part of the Cave and Karst Numberers library
3. General Business
   1. Formation of Jenolan Working Group  
      All – Agree it’s a good idea to create a Jenolan Working Group  
      Lachlan – Need someone to chair the group. I would suggest Stephanie  
      Stephanie – I’d be happy to do that, but what is the scope  
      Peter – First thing would be all the construction, and the accommodation  
      Stephanie – I think there should be the accommodation and permits. I don’t want the working group making decisions that are not what NSW cavers want, I want to make sure we are representing NSW cavers. So, I want to make sure we have the appropriate input.  
      Peter – You’re going to run it, you should run it the way you think it should be run.  
      Me – The Working Group shouldn’t be too big, but ideally will have representation from all the NSW clubs, or at least all those that visit Jenolan.  
      Lachlan – These clubs used the old cavers cottage recently.  
       SUSS  
       SSS  
       ISS  
       Cave Rescue  
       NUCC  
       MSS  
       NHVSS  
       RSS  
       BMSC  
       And to a lesser extent RMIT and Hills  
      Stephanie – I will reach out to the following clubs: SUSS, ISS, Cave Rescue, NUCC, MSS, NHVSS, RSS and BMSC
   2. Update on cavers accommodation at Jenolan  
      Stephanie – During the recent JSRG meeting I brought up the situation with the caver’s accommodation at Jenolan. Cameron Chaffey said that he was the person to talk to. Jenny Whitby, who is a member of the JCA (Jenolan Cottage Association), was also at the meeting and mentioned she would like to be involved in any discussions. Lachlan, Jenny, Simon Murphy and I talked spoke and then arranged a meeting the Cameron which took place last week. We put all the options we could consider to him. Binoomea Cottage, which SUSS used on a previous trip, is not a viable option for a number of reasons. We’re looking for a short-term option (1 – 2 years) and then during that time we’ll look for a long-term solution. In the short-term Cameron has suggested designating Jenolan Caves Cottages 7 and 8, which are situated at the top of 5 mile. We went through every option and this was the best one. From the cottages we could walk down to Wyburds.  
      Lachlan – Cavers can always drive round to the 2 mile and down Burma Rd to the Playing Field.  
      Stephanie – There would be a keypad entry, so no need to collect the accommodation keys on the way. They are also considering putting a cave key in the cottage one of the cottages so that cavers do not need to go to the Guides Office at all. The cost would be $60.00 per night for each cottage, they sleep 6, which would mean $10.00 per person per night. They are also looking at whether camping would be possible near the cottages in case there is more than 12 people on the trip.  
      Lachlan – We also asked about the possibility of camping on the Playing Fields.   
      Peter – How long until a decision is reached?  
      Lachlan – Cameron just needs to check with NPWS if they have any concerns regarding a potential footpad forming from the cottages down to Wyburds. He also needs to talk to The Department of Transport about moving the road closure on the Jenolan Road, currently the location of the closure would not allow access to the cottages, but there doesn’t appear to be any reason the closure couldn’t be moved to allow access. Cameron anticipates this should be by the end of August  
      Peter – I suspect that considering how government departments usually work, it’ll realistically be the end of September  
      Stephanie – This arrangement is expected to be for 1 or 2 years while discussing long term solutions.  
      Keir - What about getting keys to the Binoomea Road. This would cut down the time from the cottages to 2 mile and make the option more appealing to cavers.  
      Lachlan – That was discussed. Cameron wasn’t opposed to the idea, but no-one knew the condition of the roads  
      Keir – You need keys to access those roads, but, depending on the condition, you could nearly drive to Wyburds  
      Lachlan – Cameron said the guides don’t have the keys  
      Keir – The guides do, and the RFS would  
      Peter – Sounds like there’s a number of solutions. By early October we can provide the solution to the clubs. No-one can travel before then anyway.  
      We should also investigate the possibility of double-permits. So two clubs could go on the same weekend, as long as they are visiting different caves  
      Stephanie – That is something the working group can look into
   3. Meeting with Sophia Meehan  
      Lachlan – I’ve been in touch with Sophia recently. She is interested in a digital meeting with us. Is that worthwhile, and what is people’s availability?  
      Glenn – I agree, we need to have a meeting with her. Just nominate a date.  
      Lachlan – The preference is for either the last week of this month or the following week. Ideally a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday  
      Peter – Tuesday or Wednesday work for me. Not Thursday, that’s when Ruby and I generally go into town. Tuesday would probably be the best.  
      Lachlan – I’ll suggest either 31st of August or 7th of September  
      Rod – I think this first meeting should largely be a meet and greet. It shouldn’t be the only meeting we have, so we don’t need to try and get too much out of it. Let’s just start with introducing ourselves and finding out more about the Landforms and Rehabilitation unit. If we go in saying we think they’re going to lose their job and they need to justify with us why they should keep it, we won’t achieve anything.  
      Glenn – If we can understand better what their objectives are then we can better understand how we can help. We should decide who will do most of the talking on behalf of the NSWSC.   
      Peter – Who would do the talking?  
      Rod – I believe that as President it is your position to do that, unless you don’t want to  
      Peter – I am happy to, and will take a different tack than the way I have spoken tonight  
      Lachlan – Sophia made mention during the phone call I had with her that she felt Peter has particular views, so maybe someone she doesn’t know, like Glenn, would be a better choice  
      Glenn – I’d be happy to chair the meeting. We need to go in with an agenda. We also want to appear professional by, among other things, not talking over each other.  
      Peter – These are the things I think should be on the agenda:  
      1 We need regular meetings between the NSWSC and the Landforms and Rehabilitation unit.  
      2 We need to discuss how the Landforms and Rehabilitation unit can help us with access to various karst areas.  
      3 How we can work together to take advantage of funding opportunities, such as government grants, when they occur.  
      4 Facilitation.  
      I support having the Landforms and Rehabilitation unit, but there needs to be a reason for their existence.  
      Rod – We need to make sure Sophia sees and agrees to the agenda  
      Lachlan – Yes, Sophia wants to see the agenda
   4. Communication to clubs  
      Rod – One of the key things that came out of the change in personnel in the NSWSC Executive was a feeling that there was insufficient communication between the Executive and the rest of the NSWSC. One of the ways I suggest overcoming this would be to send out the minutes of these meetings  
      Stephanie – Sending the minutes is a good idea, but not straight away. We want to finalise a few things, such as the Jenolan cavers accommodation, first   
      Keir – I can put the minutes on the website  
      Peter – I think the discussion at this meeting can be quite frank and lacking in tact. An abridged version of these minutes would be better.  
      Stephanie – I agree  
      Glenn – Rather than specific the meeting minutes, let’s make it an executive update. It would largely be the abridged version of the minutes
   5. Filling vacant positions  
      Peter – I have spoken to someone recently about the conservation position. It was only this last week. She said she would think about it, I’d like to give her a month. Don’t have any ideas regarding the training coordinator  
      I told her about some of the women’s aboriginal sites around the state that are currently under threat. Currently the executive is five blokes and I would like to see more female representation. Previously it was only the Executive that met at these kind of meetings. I feel that the other jobs, like Conservation Convener, should become part of the Executive. I would like to see a lot more women involved.  
      Glenn – One of the things we are trying to achieve is getting more people involved. People will get more interested as things happen.  
      Peter – That’s what I’m saying. We haven’t had a conservation convenor for a long time, and now we might be able to get one.  
      Glenn – What about facilitating a forum open for all NSW cavers.  
      Rod – The NSWSC meetings are already open to all NSW cavers. Each club has only one representative that can vote on matters, but they are welcome to have more than one person sit in on a meeting. Last meeting we had about 6 SUSS members join. Since my time on the Executive, before this year we never had a specific Executive meeting, but even those aren’t necessarily restricted to only the Executive.  
      Lachlan – Speaking to Jenny Whitby she said that in the past she had little to no interest in the NSWSC, but now it appears that they are actually doing stuff, so it is more interesting.  
      Peter – The next council will be held at the same date, but due to the lockdowns I doubt we’ll be able to hold it at Jaunter, so it’ll have to be online. We should have more Executive meetings, I’m surprised there weren’t more Executive meetings in the past. There should be more involvement from other cavers as well.
   6. Keir – The ASF contacted me about a proposed mine expansion at Mt Etna. We’ve put in a submission regarding it.
4. Proposal for next meeting

Two weeks after meeting Sophia. Invitations to include Marilyn Scott, and Ian Eddison (the ACKMA President) from time to time.

1. Close of meeting

Around 10:05