

**New South Wales Speleological Council Executive**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday – 15th September 2021**

**7 PM Zoom Video Conference**

**Meeting opened:** 7:15 pm

1. **Attendance:**

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

Peter – I would like to introduce Marilyn. I invited Marilyn along because I am hoping she will take on the role of Conservation Convener for NSW. This is an opportunity for Marilyn to meet the rest of the executive and see how things are run.

1. **Business Arising from previous minutes**
   1. Formation of Jenolan Working Group

Stephanie – I couldn’t find the list of clubs to contact, so this hasn’t been started.

Lachlan – I will send you the list

* 1. Cavers accommodation at Jenolan

Stephanie – After our last executive meeting there was another meeting that included Cameron (Chaffey), Simon (Murphy), Jenny (Whitby), Lachlan and Grace (Matts). This meeting progressed the discussions from the previous meeting. The JCA (Jenolan Cottage Association) needs to be involved as Jenolan needs to work with an incorporated body. JCA have an annual fee of $50 to remain incorporated, which would work out at approximately an extra $1 per booking. We considered this quite reasonable and agreed to it. Cameron is now drafting the formal agreement. If everyone is happy with it then Grace will sign it on behalf of the JCA. The agreement will be reviewed after a year.

1. **Reports**
   1. JSRG (Jenolan Caves Stakeholder Reference Group)

Stephanie – The latest meeting was to discuss the Blue Lake proposal. Submissions have now been made with any revisions aimed to be finalized by the 24th of September. Once the revisions are complete the finalized proposal will be released for comment.

1. **General Business**
   1. Meeting with NPWS

Lachlan – We had a suggested date from Sophia for tomorrow, unfortunately we couldn’t get everyone together for the meeting. So I need to get a list of possible dates from everyone to put to Sophia. I’m aiming for sometime in the next month, preferably in about two weeks from now. Can everyone send me their preferred dates please?

Peter – Do we know what Sophia wants to talk about?

Lachlan – It’s mainly up to us. One thing she did mention was the opportunity to provide the NPWS point of view on certain decisions to provide a better understanding between cavers and NPWS.

Keir – Anything in particular

Lachlan – Permits are the main one.

Peter – With lockdown at the moment a lot of the parks are closed, so getting permits is onw impossible.

Lachlan – We have no control over the lockdown.

* 1. Open communication channels with JCHAPS, JEPC and other related bodies

Rod – I put this on the agenda because there are these other organisations that are comprised of predominantly cavers and have some similar goals to us. As such it seems to make sense that we should be communicating with them and potentially working with them. At this stage I just want to open the communication channels and see where it leads. I don’t know if it should be done by the executive or the Jenolan Working Group.

Peter – The NSWSC should be about bringing together people who are interested in caves and karst within NSW. That includes other organisations as well. Ian Eddison is the president of ACKMA and is also a member of CWSS. It would be nice to have communication with them as well. We should get a copy of any newsletters, submissions and other documentation these organisations produce to add to our library. I would also like to invite them to our next NSWSC meeting. Lachlan, should you invite them or should I?

Keir – Well I am the secretary of JEPC

Lachlan – And I am on JCA

Peter – I’ll try to find contact details for Jenny Whitby to invite JCHAPS

Lachlan – I can send you her contact details

Peter – I’d like to also invite Ian Eddison

Keir – I’m a little concerned about the number of people that we could have at the meeting

Peter – Should we also invite Sophia Meehan?

* 1. Next NSWSC Council meeting

Rod – At the last meeting we documented the next meeting would be held on the 30th of October and would be a face-to-face meeting hosted by Peter on his property. At our last executive meeting we agreed to change it to an on-line meeting. We could use it as an opportunity to change the date as well, if we wished.

Peter – I’d still like to have a face-to-face meeting, but with the current lockdown and COVID restrictions we don’t know if that would be possible. Best to leave it as an online meeting.

All agreed to leave the date as the 30th of October

* 1. Stephanie’s role on the executive

Stephanie – Originally Lachlan contacted me and asked if I wanted to join the executive, which I agreed to. Then at the last meeting, it appeared that I wasn’t actually part of the executive.

Rod – I know I made that distinction. According to the NSWSC Charter the Council elects 5 executive members, the President and 4 others. Because you were not elected there may be members of the NSWSC that are not happy with you being part of the executive.

Peter – Under the charter there’s only 5 executive positions. However, by invitation of the President you are welcome to participate as part of the executive. We may need to refer to the charter to clarify the situation, and make amendments where appropriate.

Peter – At the next council meeting I am aiming to confirm your position with a vote of the council. If required we can also amend the charter. But I want the vote for both you and Marilyn.

Marilyn – At this stage I’d prefer you don’t include me.

Lachlan – There is an artificial divide between the executive and the commissions and we should try to break that down by making them all part of the executive.

Peter – Due to the nature of some of the commissions there really isn’t a lot that happens from year to year. The others that are more prominent are the one’s that should be part of the executive.

* 1. COVID, caving and the ASF conference

Peter – We need to consider what to do regarding people coming on trips that are not vaccinated. My current concern is the ASF conference being held at Ceduna, but this also applies to any club trip. What would happen if we were to bring COVID to a country town that currently hasn’t been impacted by it? We would be blamed.

Glenn – Whatever we do we need to have the backing of the ASF. This could also depend on the trip. A 3 day trip to a remote location would be much more concerning than a training day somewhere local. We also have to manage peoples feelings so they don’t feel personally targeted.

Lachlan – Recently I raised the idea of the vaccine passport with the members of NUCC. I no time there were over 120 messages with no decision reached.

Glenn – The current talk is about a possible vaccine passport for NSW residents, but what about interstate cavers wishing to cave in NSW?

Peter – The ASF Executive is meeting this Saturday and I am going to asking to attend to raise this issue. My concern is for the locals of Ceduna and the other small towns between here and there. But I’m also concerned that if a caver were to bring COVID to any of these communities it would put cavers in a bad light.

Glenn – Whatever decisions are made they need to be backed by the ASF. If not, there’s a risk of it being perceived as discriminatory.

Lachlan – There’s two things that need to be considered. Firstly, what will the ASF do? Then we need to make our decision regarding vaccine passports.

Glenn – The ASF Conference is being coordinated by FUSSI and CEGSA. They will need to follow the appropriate health regulations. In the end it may be out of our hands.

Peter – I agree with Lachlan, but there is a third consideration. What if clubs spread COVID?

Keir – It’s a no-brainer. You need to be vaccinated to go caving. We cannot allow cavers to potentially spread COVID.

Glenn – We may have problems verifying cavers vaccination status. My employer has been offering vaccinations to staff as they are considered essential workers. When the government made it a requirement for all essential workers to get vaccinated we asked to staff for there vaccine status. Then the union took us to court saying we were violating peoples privacy.

Keir – We’ve now reached 80% of people receiving their first jab. It’s reasonably safe to say we’ll reach 80% with two jabs soon.

1. **Proposal for next meeting**

13th October at 7:00pm

1. **Close of meeting**

Around 9:10pm