

Connecting Country (Mount Alexander Region) Inc

Annual general meeting and 'Lessons from ecological monitoring' presentation

Minutes



Time and date: 2.00 to 3.30 pm on Saturday 26 September 2020

Venue: Online via Zoom

Attendance	
Committee:	Brendan Sydes (President, chair), Saide Gray (Vice President), Max Kay (Treasurer), Marie Jones (Secretary), Chris Brooke, Deborah Wardle, Karoline Klein, Malcolm Trainor
Staff:	Asha Bannon, Bonnie Humphreys, Frances Howe, Ivan Carter, Jacqui Slingo, Jess Lawton
Members and visitors:	Anna Campbell, Anne P, Barb Went, Beth Mellick, Bev Phillips, Bonny Cassidy, Damian Kelly, David Cheal, Deane Williams, Debra White, Dee Burge, Denis Gibson, Doug McNaughton, Duncan Gibson, Flynn, Jacinta Humphrey, Jenny Rolland and Euan Moore, Jill Teschendorff, Jill Williams, Katie Scott, Kerrie Jennings, Lesley, Lindsay and Joan Howe, Liz Smith, Lois Denham, Lou Citroen, Marge Townrow, Mark and Jan Dunn, Matthew Harriage, Merryn Davies, Nathan Gregory, Philip Hopley, Sarah Newsam, Sue Boekel, Tanya Loos, Wanda Millicer
Apologies:	Anitra Nelson, Anna Murphy, Chris Johnson, Chris Timewell, Deb Shaw, Garry Gibson

Timing	Item	Person	Activity	Decisions	
Welcome					
2.00 pm	1	Welcome	Ivan Carter	Ivan welcomed everyone to the event.	-
	2	Acknowledgement of Country	(Engagement Coordinator)	We acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land, the Dja Dja Wurrung and their care of the land, and paid respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.	-
	3	Connecting Country's story	Frances Howe (Director)	Frances presented on Connecting Country's work and why it is important, and introduced Connecting Country's annual report for 2019-20 (available online).	-
Annual general meeting (AGM)					
2.15 pm	4	AGM introduction and apologies	Brendan Sydes (President)	Brendan opened the AGM, noted meeting apologies, and explained the online voting system.	-
	5	Minutes of the previous AGM		Minutes from Connecting Country's last AGM (held on 16 November 2019) were circulated to members.	To accept the minutes of Connecting Country's previous AGM. <i>Moved: Marie Jones</i> <i>Seconded: Malcolm Trainor</i> <i>Carried (34+ votes)</i>
	6	President's report		Brendan thanked the staff, volunteers, funders, donors and fellow committee members for contributing to Connecting Country's success. He noted that COVID-19 has affected activities but thanked staff for continuing work despite difficult circumstances.	-
	7	Treasurer's report	Max Kay (Treasurer)	Max presented the 2019-20 financial results, as confirmed by independent auditor. Connecting Country recorded an expected financial loss (\$62,453) because secured income was not enough to cover expenses. The committee agreed to access savings to address gap to maintain core organisational capacity. Despite challenges we remain in a sound financial position, backed by a financial reserve (\$203,416).	To accept Connecting Country's audited financial statements for 2019-20 financial year. <i>Moved: Max Kay</i> <i>Seconded: Deb Wardle</i> <i>Carried (35+ votes)</i>

Timing	Item		Person	Activity	Decisions
	8	Election of Connecting Country committee of management	Brendan Sydes	All 2019-20 committee members were renominated for their existing roles. No additional nominations were received. As a single candidate was nominated for each of the four executive member positions (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer) and four ordinary member positions, each candidate was reelected unopposed.	All committee of management members were re-elected to 2020-21 committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President: Brendan Sydes • Vice President: Sadie Gray • Treasurer: Max Kay • Secretary: Marie Jones • Christine Brooke • Deb Wardle • Karoline Klein • Malcolm Trainor
	9	Connecting Country fees		Connecting Country does not charge fees to join as a new member or renew annual membership.	To determine Connecting Country joining fee and annual subscription fee (\$0). <i>Moved: Saide Gray</i> <i>Seconded: Brendan Sydes</i> <i>Carried (34+ votes)</i>
	10	Audit of Connecting Country for 2020-21 financial year		Connecting Country's current auditor is Sean Denham and Associates.	To appoint Sean Denham and Associates as auditors for 2020-21. <i>Moved: Christine Brooke</i> <i>Seconded: Karoline Klein</i> <i>Carried (32+ votes)</i>
	11	Funding update		Brendan stated Connecting Country's work is at risk because current grants do not cover all our activities. He thanked supporters for generous donations (\$15,000) in 2019-20. We work hard to find support and recently secured project funding from the Ross Trust. He strongly encouraged contributions to our work, large or small.	-
	12	Questions and AGM close		In response to audience questions, Brendan confirmed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit was paid for by Connecting Country, not pro-bono. • We have a funding group of Connecting Country committee and staff members, and other community members are welcome to get involved. 	-

Guest presentations: Lessons from ecological monitoring

2.30 pm	13	Connecting Country's ten years of ecological monitoring	Jess Lawton (Monitoring Coordinator)	Jess took us on a journey through Connecting Country's long-term monitoring programs, with a focus on nest boxes and bird surveys. A copy of the presentation is available via Connecting Country's website.	-
3.00 pm	14	The impact of urbanisation on birds	Jacinta Humphrey (La Trobe Uni)	Jacinta described her research into the impact of expanding urbanisation on wildlife, with a focus on birds across Melbourne's suburbs. A copy of the presentation is available via Connecting Country's website.	-
3.20 pm	15	Questions	Ivan Carter	Jess and Jacinta answered questions from the audience, facilitated by Ivan.	-
3.40 pm	16	Event close		Ivan thanked presenters and attendees, and closed the event.	-

Signed:  Date: 8 December 2020