

Date: Saturday, 25 May 2024

Time: 9.30 am

Location: National Office, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton, Vic, 3053

Chair: Mandy Bamford (MB)

Present

17 voting members

Apologies

Christine Thomas| Alison Russell-French |Duncan Mackenzie| A/Prof Jim Radford| Prof Martine Maron| Andrew Bennett| Ken Armstrong| Dr Mike Bamford| Gavin O'Meara|

Proxies Received

Valid proxies were received from 276 members.

1. Welcome

BirdLife Australia President Mandy Bamford opened the meeting and welcomed members, supporters, and staff attending in person at the National Office and those joining via the livestream webinar. There being a quorum, the meeting was declared open at 9.30am.

MB acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land. She acknowledged the board directors for their efforts throughout 2023, especially Professor Martine Marron, who is stepping down from the board. MB also gave a note of thanks to the former CEO, Paul Sullivan, who retired last year after 10 years of service. MB reflected on how Martine and Paul, along with the previous president, John Barkla, saw BirdLife Australia's success and growth as the nation's preeminent bird conservation organisation. Kate Millar was also introduced to the members as the new CEO.

2. Meeting Apologies

Apologies were received from Christine Thomas, Alison Russell- French, Duncan Mackenzie, Jim Radford, Martine Maron, Andrew Bennett, Ken Armstrong, Mike Bamford and Gavin O'Meara.

2.1. Proxies

The Board asked that proxy forms should be given to the President (MB). MB also raised that the agenda would include the nomination of a BirdLife Australia Fellow in item 8.1 which was supplemented at late notice.

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A list of questions submitted by members prior to the AGM would be answered in agenda item 10. Those questions and answers would also be made available to all members on the website after the AGM.

MB reported that 276 of BirdLife's members had agreed to participate by proxy where members directed the President how to vote on matters requiring resolution, such as the Annual Report, Financial Accounts, the Auditors' Report and the election of Board Directors, Fellows, and Honorary Life Members.

3. Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting held on 27 May 2023

The minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting held on 27 May 2023 were published on the BirdLife Australia website and available to members on request. The count of proxy votes was in favour of accepting the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting. The President called for the minutes of the 2023 AGM to be adopted. The minutes of the BirdLife Australia Annual General Meeting held on 27 May 2023 were adopted as a true and correct record of that meeting.

Moved: Prof Hugh Possingham. **Seconded:** Brian Boyd

Carried

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3.1. President's Address

MB reflected on the organisation's resilience during her first year as President, especially the work to resume normal operations post-COVID. Staff remained committed to bird conservation and are working with the new CEO, Kate Millar, towards operationalising the Bird Conservation Strategy (BCS). With government grants increasingly becoming more competitive for environmental charities to secure, the CEO and executive leadership team are exploring ways to ensure the sustainability for the organisation. On behalf of the board, the President acknowledged and thanked the directors, staff, volunteers, donors, and members for their support of BirdLife – especially members who have been around since the BOCA and RAOU days.

4. Presentation of the Annual Report of Directors for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The 2023 Annual Report was presented to all members. It is available on the AGM section of the BirdLife Australia website.

The President thanked the Board Directors and acknowledged their commitment and contributions to the success of the organisation's goals. In addition, MB thanked the members, volunteers, donors, CEO, and staff for their important work supporting BirdLife's position as the nation's leader in bird conservation.

MB introduced and presented each of the Board directors in attendance to the members.

The count of proxy votes were in favour of accepting the Annual Report of Directors.

The President called for the 2023 Annual Report of Directors to be adopted.

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Moved: John Barkla. **Seconded:** Tuanh Nguyen and Kerry Herman.

Carried

5. Presentation of the Financial Accounts of the Company and the Auditors' Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

Gary Nelson (GN), Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, presented the Financial Accounts and the Auditors' Report for 2023 on behalf of the Board. He confirmed that an independent auditor RSM was engaged to ensure that BirdLife's financial statements were fairly and appropriately presented and compliant with the not-for-profit requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB).

GN outlined that the board made a considered decision in 2023 to increase investment in BirdLife Australia's resources to deliver a greater impact in the medium term – especially to build capacity to operationalise the BCS. Hence, by strategically drawing down from BirdLife Australia's reserves, the board believes new development initiatives commenced in 2023 will lead to growth in future income and deliver impactful bird conservation outcomes. The value of this draw-down is reflected in the \$3.1m operating deficit in the Operating Statement.

The organisation's position remained strong and fiscally healthy, and the Finance and Audit Committee and the Board will continue to monitor income and expenditure in the next twelve months to ensure there is financial stability.

There were no questions from the members throughout the presentation.

The President called for the Financial Accounts and the Auditors' Report for the year ending 31 December 2023 to be adopted.

Moved: Gerard Early. **Seconded:** Judith Hoyle.

Carried

6. Declaration of the Election of Directors

All eligible voting members were notified and invited to submit nominations to the Board through the member magazine, *Australian Birdlife*, and on the BirdLife Australia website.

The President noted that there were three vacancies on the Board and nominations were received from Judith Hoyle, Ashley Bunce, David Mould, Gillian Jervis, Paddy Moylan and Stephen Garnett.

Summary candidate statements and ballot forms were posted to members in their AGM notification pack. The full candidate statements were also available on the BirdLife AGM website.

According to the Constitution, the voting for Board Directors must commence after 10:00am (AEST) after the in-person ballot count has ended. Following a count of proxy and attendee votes, the President announced the three elected Directors elected to the Board were Judith Hoyle, Gillian Jervis and Stephen Garnett.

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The President congratulated Gillian Jervis and Stephen Garnett on being elected and Judith Hoyle on being re-elected to the Board for a three-year term commencing from the closure of the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

7. Presentation of BirdLife's Achievements in 2023

BirdLife Australia's new Chief Executive Officer, Kate Millar, gave a presentation on the organisation's achievements in 2023. Her presentation covered key activities in 2023, including:

- BirdLife's impressive statistics as a member-based organisation and a charity in bird conservation – with over 107 ecologists, around 90,000 completed bird surveys in 2023, and 375,000 growing supporters.
- Advocating for stronger Nature Laws by partnering with local groups and regional networks to lobby policymakers and politicians.
- Our scientists actively lead biodiversity discussions in relation to the nation's Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Working with significant funding from donors to explore strategic projects for BirdLife.
- Visiting the Branches, Network Groups, Observatories and Reserves, and the Regional staff as part of the CEO's on-ground engagements.
- Supporting the annual Aussie Bird Count and successful 2023 Australasian Ornithological Conference in QLD.
- Hosting a film event to launch a documentary on Australasian Bitterns for members and donors in Melbourne and Sydney.
- Together with the Places Your Love alliance, BirdLife exerted pressure on the Australian Government to remove biodiversity offset from the Nature Repair Bill. Together with local, national and international groups, BirdLife lobbied the Environment Minister to reject Walker Corporation's Toondah Harbour project.

8. Election of Honorary Life Members

Under the BirdLife Australia Constitution, persons can be elected by the members on the recommendation of the Board as an Honorary Life Member of BirdLife Australia. Over the past year, the Board had carried out a rigorous process involving nominations from members and the Community Grants & Awards Committee. As a result, the Board recommended that members elect Alison Russell-French OAM and Duncan Mackenzie OAM as Honorary Life Members of BirdLife Australia.

The proposed citations were posted to members when they received their AGM notification pack. The full citations are also available on the BirdLife Australia website.

Following a count of proxy votes, the President announced that Alison Russell-French OAM and Duncan Mackenzie OAM had been elected Honorary Life Members of BirdLife Australia.

8.1 Election of BirdLife Australia Fellow

Under the BirdLife Australia Constitution, persons can be elected by the members on the recommendation of the Board as a Fellow of BirdLife Australia. Over the past year, the Board had carried out a rigorous process involving nominations

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from members, the Research & Conservation Committee and the Community Grants & Awards Committee. As a result, the Board recommended that members should elect Associate Professor Jim Radford as a Fellow of BirdLife Australia.

The proposed citation was posted or emailed to members and the full citation is available on the BirdLife Australia website.

Following a count of proxy votes and votes from the floor, the Chair announced that Associate Professor Jim Radford had been elected as a Fellow of BirdLife Australia.

The President called for Associate Professor Jim Radford to be installed as a Fellow of BirdLife Australia.

Moved: Jarrod Pittson. **Seconded:** Pamela Sutton-Legaud.

Carried

The Chair congratulated the new Fellow and Honorary Life Members and thanked them for their distinguished service.

9. Announcement of BirdLife Australia Awards

9.1 DL Serventy Medal

The DL Serventy Medal acknowledges outstanding contributions made to Australasian ornithology on an assessment of the nominee's published scientific contribution to Australasian ornithology.

Nominations are made by members of BirdLife Australia and are considered and recommended by the Scientific Awards Committee and the Research & Conservation Committee before being approved by the Board. This award is made by the Board and does not require confirmation by members.

The President announced that Professor Richard Fuller was awarded the DL Serventy Medal.

9.2 JN Hobbs Memorial Medal

The JN Hobbs Memorial Medal is awarded to an amateur ornithologist who has made a significant contribution to the knowledge or conservation of birds in Australia.

Nominations are made by members of BirdLife Australia and are considered and recommended by the Scientific Awards Committee and the Research & Conservation Committee before being approved by the Board. This award is made by the Board and does not require confirmation by members.

The President announced that Brian Venables was awarded the JN Hobbs Memorial Medal.

The President congratulated Richard and Brian for their very well-deserved recognition.

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10. Questions and Other Matters from Members Submitted by Proxy

According to the Constitution, the Annual General Meeting can only decide matters for which 28 days' notice has been given. No such notice has been given for this current meeting.

The President noted that there were questions raised by members before the AGM. These questions were addressed and along with the answers, they will be available to all members via the AGM section of the BirdLife Australia website after the AGM.

In addition, a member, Dr Alison Street, asked for an update on Toondah Harbour. This recent 2024 milestone will be captured as part of the 2024 Annual Report. However, the President invited Board Director Judith Hoyle to provide the members with a verbal update, as she was instrumental in BirdLife's successful multi-year campaign.

There was no other business.

The President thanked everyone who attended the AGM in person, via proxy, and via the livestream webinar. MB also acknowledged everyone working behind the scenes to organise the AGM.

As there was no other business, the President declared the 2024 BirdLife Australia Annual General Meeting closed at 11:00am.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date: