

ACT RED HILL BUSH REGENERATORS INC
MINUTES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

10.30 am, 1 December 2019 at Red Hill Glasgow Street plantings

1. Attendees

Ross Kingsland, Sue Ross, Robyn Tulloh, Sue Parr, Geoff Thompson, Trish Munro, Michael Mulvaney, Wayne Fletcher, Paul Ratcliffe, Tom Tyrell, Collette Barton-Ross, Andrew Zelnik, Ed Bristow, Margie Adamson, Helen Weinart

2. Apologies: Nil

3. Welcome

R Kingsland welcomed the group to the AGM.

4. Minutes of the 2018 AGM

Accepted. Moved R Tulloh, seconded Paul Ratcliffe.

5. Business arising

Nil.

6. Correspondence

Correspondence in chronological order: 1 July 2018 to 30 July 2019.

To / From and date	Subject
To ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. Authorised for publication 8 August 2018	Submission on Engagement with Development Application Process (website)
To ACT Conservation Council 11 October 2018	Nomination of Paul Ratcliffe for Environmentalist of the Year
Submission to Department of the Environment EPBC 29 October 2019	MBark / FGC proposal (website)
From ACT Heritage Council 21 November 2018	Advice that the ACT Heritage Council decided to enter the Red Hill Historic Plantings to the ACT Heritage Register on 15 November 2018. (website)
Submission to ACT Environment 12 April 2019	For \$30,000 grant for Little Eagle ecology (website)
From ACT Minister for Environment and Land Management 6 June 2019	Offer of 2019-20 ACT Environment Grant for The Ecology and Movement of ACT's Adult Female Little Eagle (website)
From Dept Social Services Community Grants 9 April 2019	Community grant for Tools \$1,384.00

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<p>Department of Environment Planning and Development 18 April 2019</p>	<p>Context: A development application was submitted to the ACT Dept of Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development on 16 April 2018, seeking to increase a storage facility from 500m² to 20,500m². Result: BLOCK: 7 SECTION: 66 SUBURB: DEAKIN DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION NUMBER: 201833473 Development Application Number 201833473 has been REFUSED.(website)</p>
<p>From ACT Registrar-General 21 July 2019</p>	<p>Changes to legislation for Incorporated Associations</p>

7. President's Report

Ross Kingsland tabled his report at Attachment A. The report, which had been circulated earlier, was accepted. R Kingsland acknowledged Wayne Fletcher, Michael Mulvaney and Jacky Fogarty who had contributed a great deal about Red Hill Reserve. He also noted that the Draft Integrated Plan may be a good model for other areas.

8. Treasurer's Report

Refer Attachment B.

Treasurer's report accepted.

9. Activities Report

Michael Mulvaney spoke about the Little Eagle tracking project. Other activities are reported elsewhere.

Michael Mulvaney also spoke to the issue about whether there is a rare / endangered Dianella on Red Hill and asked for any sightings of what may be Dianella amoena - with yellow anthers. There may be approximately 150 in the FGC woodland and 100 more elsewhere.

10. Red Hill Integrated Plan

R Kingsland advised that the RHRG is putting together a response. The proposed treatment of Section 66 is strongly supported. With regard to the FGC lease area RHRG recognizes there are differing perspectives, but overall accepts what is in the draft IP although this isn't RHRG's first option. RHRG wants independent advice on FGC's need for financial support. RHRG also wants protection of corridors into Hughes and Garran and will strongly advocate for inclusion of the quoted 12.5 hectares from the FGC lease into the Red Hill Reserve.

Wayne Fletcher spoke to the Draft IP and handed out his statement, Attachment C. He summarized the Legislative Assembly resolution background. He believes that the IP is a one-off opportunity to get a decision on the future of the FGC lease and surrounds and that if the FGC is denied this plan it could go back to its current

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zoning rights. Also, that FGC only has a couple more years without financial support. MBark is apparently offering in-kind support particularly with irrigation, more so than cash.

Comments from others included concerns about environmentally friendly development, what if the FGC fails, possibility for offsets (unlikely) etc. RHRG members expressed views that there are unknowns in the future which cannot be practically addressed now and that we should concentrate on the certainties. FGC viability can't be proven forever, so this issue shouldn't be a key plank of the RHRG submission. Of the 10 hectares included in the yellow 'circle' MBark will probably use 30%. Need to keep in mind RHRG priorities. The IP is realistically pretty good and the situation could be worse off if we don't accept it. Noted that some Hughes and Garran residents' concerns are real, but that their issues may not be a planning issue.

All but one attendees indicated that RHRG's position on the Draft IP was supported. One abstained due to their concerns about the viability of the FGC.

R Tulloh asked whether individual submissions would be helpful.

11. Election of office bearers

Geoff Thompson was the Returning Officer. One nomination was received for each of the office bearers and these nominees were declared duly elected.

Results are at [Attachment D](#).

12. Other Business

S Ross thanked R Kingsland for his work on the IP and negotiations with MBark, M Mulvaney for the huge amount of support of Red Hill he does in the 'background' and P Ratcliffe for organizing the working bees and maintaining the RHRG website.

M Mulvaney noted that there have been positive developments in Small Ant Blue activities.

P Ratcliffe to propose a Management Plan be developed for the Heritage Callistemons.

Meeting closed at 11.15 am

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ACT Red Hill Regenerators – President’s Annual Report 2019

Red Hill Regenerators (ACT Red Hill Bush Regenerators Group) President’s Annual Report, December 2019

The time and energy of the committee was again focused on the proposed housing and other developments in areas adjacent to Red Hill Nature Reserve. Through the efforts of a number of people, especially Wayne Fletcher, the ACT Legislative Assembly resolved to prepare an Integrated Plan for Red Hill Nature Reserve and Surrounds and the Red Hill Bush Regeneration Group, “Red Hill Regenerators” (**RHR**), was invited to participate in its formulation.

Some of our members, Wayne Fletcher, Jacky Fogarty, Michael Mulvaney in particular, gave a great deal of their time and expertise in working to achieve this outcome.

The development of this plan by the ACT government has proven to be a strategic, transparent and collaborative process. This approach by the ACT government for determining future land use in the vicinity of Red Hill Nature Reserve seems to be a productive and efficient way of establishing and responding to community views and values. We applaud the ACT government for this.

Highlights

2018/19 financial year:

- We applied for and gained a \$30,000 grant from the ACT government in June 2019 to assist with an existing tracking program for Little Eagles, enabling the purchase and fitting of additional tracking devices in order to better understand their ecology and enable the best conservation decisions to be made. Little Eagles frequent Red Hill and RHR members are involved with their observation. Michael Mulvaney was the main person involved.
- The historic plantings of Callistemons, Darling Pea and Grevillia between the kiosk and summit of Red Hill were formally entered into the ACT Heritage Register on 15 November 2018.
- The 'Ties to Red Hill' book launch took place at the Red Hill Coffee N Beans cafe on 4 December 2018. It is a book of poems by Paul Williamson with text and illustrations by Michael Mulvaney and Michael Bedingfield.
- 200 trees were planted on World Environment Day, 2 June 2019, aided by a Commonwealth Government Volunteer \$1384 equipment grant.
- A ceremony was held on 27 October 2018 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the heritage plantings, attended by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman.
- Our activity sessions involved undertaking plantings and protecting these with plastic guards and Cootamundra Wattle cuttings, removing Cootamundra Wattle especially on the northern slopes of Red Hill, removing Verbascum and woody weeds plus watering our plantings.

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- Our 10 monthly Sunday work activities attracted between 11 and 46 people, providing a total of 407 hours plus 7 weekday activities. The total number of RHR member hours including individuals working singly or in small groups together with RHR meetings was 840.
- Another butterfly walk was held this year, led by Dr Suzi Bond, an expert on ACT butterflies.
- Dr Michael Mulvaney, our Conservation Officer and scientific expert on the ecology of Red Hill, led a nature walk in the Reserve last November behind Garran and again this November, behind Red Hill. They attracted 20 and 12 people respectively and those who attended were entertained and informed about the significance of the Red Hill Nature Reserve and the details of its ecology.

This financial year:

- We were recently awarded The ACT Australian Community Media Landcare Community Group Award for our work on Red Hill. Michael Mulvaney accepted the award at a presentation ceremony. We are being considered for the National Landcare Awards being presented in November next year.
- We hosted over 60 young students and their teachers from Canberra Girls Grammar school who helped with horehound removal and planted 60 tubestock.

Thank you to individual members who work independently on the Reserve, including Colin Pilliner, Jacky Fogarty, Rob Walls, Michael Mulvaney, Sue Ross and Paul Ratcliffe plus Roy McDowall for his photography.

We also continue to be grateful for the work of our ranger partners from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS).

We currently have 74 financial members and 205 members and friends on our group email list.

Volunteer hours Activity

Activity	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of Sunday Activities (mid-week included up to 2016)	8	11	11	10
Average number of participants	15.5	14.1	14.1	15.9
Number of Mid-week Activities				7
Average number of participants				4
Total number of volunteer hours*	967	906	1,011	829
Total hours including meetings, etc.		1,249	1,042	840

* These hours represent on-reserve work, education of members and the AGM for the financial year but not meetings, preparation of submissions, etc.

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Many thanks to all members for your time and effort in helping us achieve a better nature reserve. Thanks particularly to committee members. The Committee's knowledge and commitment has ensured the Red Hill Regenerators continues to make a significant contribution to the long-term wellbeing of the Reserve. In particular, thanks to:

- Michael Mulvaney, the founder of RHR, for his deep ecological knowledge base and his continued, inspiring passion.
- Paul Ratcliffe for his work as Treasurer and for many other contributions including the RHR website and Twitter account.
- Sue Ross for her role as Secretary and supporting the group's work in so many ways.
- The Red Hill rangers, the Parks and Conservation Service, the Southern ACT Catchment Group and many in the ACT government who work with us to achieve our objectives.

Red Hill Regenerators Office Bearers. 2019

Office	Office Bearers 2019
President	Ross Kingsland
Vice President	Robyn Tulloh
Secretary	Sue Ross
Treasurer	Paul Ratcliffe
Ordinary committee members	Michael Mulvaney, Trish Munro, Sue Parr
Other positions	
Public Officer	Sue Ross
Conservation Officer	Michael Mulvaney
Parkcare Coordinators Rep	Sue Ross
Task Coordinator	Paul Ratcliffe
Web & Twitter Manager	Paul Ratcliffe
Equipment Officer - tools	Paul Ratcliffe
Equipment Officer - chemicals	Sue Ross
Notices Coordinators	Robyn Tulloh, Trish Munro

Ross Kingsland

President, Red Hill Regenerators (Red Hill Bush Regeneration Group)

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2018 - 2019

INCOME

DATE	ITEM	AMOUNT (\$)
2017-2018	Membership fees	60.00
13 April 2019	Commonwealth Equipment grant	1384.00
30/06/19	Total income for year	1444.00

EXPENDITURE

DATE	ITEM	AMOUNT (\$)
31/07/18	ACT Conservation Council 2018-19	110.00
11/06/19	Equipment purchases	531.00
30/6/19	Total expenditure for year	641.00

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

01 July 2018	Opening balance	\$1,448.60 (credit)
30 June 2019	Closing balance	\$2,251.60.00 (credit)

Paul Ratcliffe
 Treasurer, Red Hill Bush Regeneration Group
 1 July 2019

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Draft Red Hill Integrated Plan

Overarching considerations

- The Integrated plan provides a once in a generation opportunity to bring certainty to the protection and management of the Red Hill environment.
- Neither of the major ACT political parties has any interest in revisiting or repeating this exercise.
- The Integrated Plan needs to gain passage through the Legislative Assembly in early 2020. Any delay risks putting the Integrated Plan into the ACT election mix which would almost certainly result in it being shelved.

Benefits of the Integrated Plan

As a result of the planning process we importantly have an **ACT Government document** which:

- **includes at its centre and highlights** the key values of the Red Hill Nature Reserve and the need to properly protect and manage the Nature Reserve;
- after several decades of struggle **provides certainty** in relation to the proper protection and management of the Red Hill environment;
- recognises the need to protect the ecological values not only within the Nature Reserve but importantly also in the surrounding areas, together with the existing links and corridors to other areas of high ecological value;
- incorporates substantial buffer zones to protect ecological corridors and the amenity of residents;
- leaves open the exact location, size and design of the proposed retirement village and supporting infrastructure in the southern part of the golf course.
 - This approach will enable negotiations to be undertaken between the FGC, the developer, the government and residents to ensure that important biodiversity, heritage, ecological corridors and residents' amenity are properly protected;
- will result in the zoning of the golf course lease area to be appropriately amended to only allow recreational activities to take place. This will:
 - restrict the opportunity for any further development to occur on the golf course; and
 - ensure that in the event of the golf club failing the whole of the golf course will not be turned into a suburb;
- will most likely result in the incorporation into the Nature Reserve of the 12.5 hectares of high-quality woodland located in the NW corner of the golf course;
- see Section 66 Deakin being rezoned to part Commercial CZ2 Business Zone and part PRZ1 Urban Open Space Zone to protect the important ecological values of the area;
- will result in capping of the Old Deakin tip; and
- will ensure that any resultant development proposals in the area will be subject to the normal ACT and Commonwealth environmental assessment and approvals processes.

The draft Integrated Plan strikes a balance between the need to; provide strong protection for biodiversity both inside and outside the Reserve, protect the amenity of residents, maintain an 18-hole golf course and provide for appropriate development on Section 66 Deakin.

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The Nature of the Integrated Plan

The draft Integrated Plan is a composite and interlinked document that ties together a platform of competing interests into a single solution. Take away one part of it and you have a flow-on effect on other parts of the solution. The risk is high that the whole process could fail as a result. By example-:

- Under the Integrated Plan, the FGC would give up its current Territory Plan rights to develop commercial activities such as hotels, motels, guest houses, child care centres, indoor and outdoor recreational centres etc in return for the granting of rights to develop a one-off retirement village somewhere in the Southern Zone of the Course. This is a crucial balance point in the Integrated Plan. Take away the possibility of developing a retirement village and the FGC will be no longer willing to surrender its commercial opportunities and will fight to retain them. Under this scenario the southern part of the golf course will become the focus for FGC development proposals that will be fully permissible under the existing Territory Plan if the Integrated Plan is successfully opposed. This could also result in major disruption to the golf course layout, with the 12.5 hectares of woodland in the NW corner of the golf course no longer being available for incorporation into the Nature Reserve. The problems of the last 20 plus years will simply shift to the southern part of the golf course.

Given the parlous state of the FGC financial situation, if it is not able to undertake some form of development, it is likely that the club will fail in the near future. Without the protections afforded by the Integrated Plan for this circumstance it is highly likely that a range of damaging activities would occur in the area.

One thing is certain “no development on the FGC” is not a viable option. Pursuing such a position is likely to result in the failure of the Integrated Plan process or result in an unworkable Integrated Plan or in the situation in which there is no Integrated Plan, failure of the FGC with massive uncertainty and unknown consequences for the environment of the area.

By far the majority of people do not want the FGC to fail. This is not because they love the game of golf or love the club. It is because people like the nature of the golf course environment. It is certain that if the golf club fails the nature of this area would dramatically change for the worse.

FGC Situation

A number of people take the view that the Integrated Plan should only be supported if the FGC is able to demonstrate that without the income generated by the proposed retirement village that it will not be financially viable, and that the income generated by the one-off retirement village will actually solve the golf club’s financial problems.

Following is information to address those matters.

Financial viability of the FGC without a retirement village

- The major income source which keeps the club going is membership, in particular playing members. Club membership declined from around 1400 in 2009 to around 900 in 2018 with playing membership declining to around 670. A great deal of effort is currently being put into increasing all forms of membership and providing attractive playing packages. Some positive outcomes are being seen but nowhere near large enough or rapid enough to solve the club’s financial problems.

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- The FGC audited Financial Statements for the period ending 30 September 2019 show that:
 - The club's **operating loss for the financial year was \$368,969**, in increase from \$94,447 in the previous financial year;
 - The total borrowings for the club are \$1.6m which rules out any ability to undertake further borrowings;
- Given the dry conditions which Canberra is currently experiencing, in order to keep the golf course in reasonable playing conditions the estimated cost of water for the period December 2019 to the end of February 2020 is \$343,000. In order offset some of this cost the golf club has raised its existing water levy from \$5 to \$10 per round.
- There is little doubt that without a major injection of funds in the very near future the club will not be able to maintain its operations.

Financial viability of the FGC with a retirement village

- Much of the income resulting from any retirement village development will be “in-kind” rather than cash
- A major contribution to the future financial viability of the FGC will be the developer funding up-front the replacement of the club's decrepit and highly inefficient irrigation system with a new state of the art system at a cost of over \$1m.
- The developer will also fund up-front, at a cost or \$1m plus, the construction of new dams to triple the water storage capacity of the club.
- Both of these activities will significantly reduce the club's operating cost and reliance on potable water.
- Income derived from the retirement village development will also be used to undertake essential maintenance and upgrades in many areas which are long overdue.
- The club will be in a position to move from a position of indebtedness to having funds in the bank
- It is also intended that there will be a refurbishment/renewal of the aged clubhouse which will make it much more attractive for revenue raising functions.
- It is also expected the residents in the retirement village will become club members with membership fees paid by the operator of the retirement village to the club – an on-going source of income for at least 10 years.

Conclusion

The Draft Integrated Plan is a well-constructed, comprehensive and professionally prepared document that meets the Terms of Reference placed on it by the Legislative Assembly Resolution. The preparation of this draft plan has been conducted collaboratively with the relevant community and stakeholder groups.

If the Integrated Plan is not adopted, we will find ourselves back to the old ground hog days of the last 20 plus years and likely be faced with a far worse predicament.

The benefits of the Integrated Plan are substantial.

It needs to be remembered that the Integrated Plan provides the opportunity to bring to and end the uncertainty and poor management practices of the past

Under the draft Integrated Plan there will be some loss of modified open space and associated vegetation to enable the development of a retirement village and an associated access driveway. While this area has been modified it still contains important ecological values which need to be protected. There must be close and detailed consultation between the prospective developer, the FGC, the government and the community in relation to the

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possible design, size and siting of any prospective retirement village and changes to the golf course layout to remove and reduce any impacts on these ecological values and the amenity of residents.

Clearly it would be preferable to have no development take place but as outlined in this paper this does not appear possible. It does however need to be remembered that successful adoption of the Integrated Plan will remove all the uncertainty and poor management of the past. Into the future conservation of the biodiversity found in the area will be guaranteed along with the protection and proper management of many hundreds of hectares of open space which provides habitat for a vast array of important and in many cases threatened flora and fauna.

It would appear that this is the best outcome that can be achieved and given the overall resulting benefits for the Nature Reserve, biodiversity conservation and the amenity of residents the draft Integrated Plan should be supported.

Comments on the draft Integrated Plan can be emailed to Terrplan@act.gov.au by 31 December 2019.

Wayne Fletcher
1 December 2019

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The following office bearers were elected unanimously. No other nominations were received.

Red Hill Regenerators Office Bearers

1 December 2019

Office	Office Bearers 2018/19
President	Ross Kingsland
Vice President	Robyn Tulloh
Secretary	Sue Ross
Public Officer	Sue Ross
Treasurer	Paul Ratcliffe
Ordinary Member	Michael Mulvaney
Ordinary Member	Trish Munro
Ordinary Member	Sue Parr