

The thirty ninth meeting (BM39) of WHA's Board took place face-to-face on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.

Members of the Board are:

- Cameron Bell (Acting Chair), Funding Member, Agriculture Victoria
- Sharon Kolek, Funding Member, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Michelle Campbell-Ward, Individual Member Representative elected by the Individual Members
- Andrew Pearce, nominee of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DCCEEW)
- Michelle Rodan, Animal Health Committee Representative
- Three organisations elected by the Organisational Members:
  - o Leanne Wicker, Wildlife Disease Association Australasia
  - o Julien Grosmaire, Australian Veterinary Conversation Biologists
  - o Nicola Craddock, Zoo and Aquarium Association (Apology)
- Rodney Vile, Invited Member, Environment Agency
- James Newman, Invited Active Observer (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water).

This was the second meeting of the year. As well as routine business, the board:

- De-briefed on a workshop held the previous day to progress strategic planning for the next phase of development of WHA's next strategic plan, and;
- Discussed emergency preparedness for issues involving wildlife health and potential ways forward for future development of the WHA Emergencies Program.

It was agreed that the planning workshop, held with both the Board and members of senior management of WHA, was very successful. The next stage is for the Strategic Working Group, which is leading development of the strategy, to examine outputs generated from the planning process so far and bring a recommendation on approach to Phase 2 of the project to the Board for consideration at their next meeting (BM40). As the end of the current planning cycle approaches, strategic planning will become a standing item on future Board agendas. This will continue until such time as WHA transitions from WildPLAN to its next iteration (currently scheduled for June 30, 2025).

Emergency preparedness for wildlife continues to become more and more important. The Board was updated on the challenges the organisation is facing in the emergencies space for wildlife, and discussed how the collective skills, knowledge and experience of WHA could be used to assist in addressing this gap in Australia's emergency management arrangements. Simone Vitali (Program Manager – Emergencies) provided a briefing which included a Theory of Change for the Emergencies Program at WHA and a generic Wildlife Emergency Response Framework that could be used to assist response, and other agencies involved in wildlife emergencies. This is an as yet unfunded area for WHA and, despite the challenges, WHA is well placed and will move ahead with socialising these solutions, recognising that any implementation would require addition funding to be secured.

Other items discussed included an update on the transition of WHA Inc. to a public company limited by guarantee (CLG), as well as recruitment of a new chair: both of which are going very well and, for the public CLG, close to finalisation. Recruitment of a new chair is expected to be completed by the next meeting of the board in June (BM40) when members will be notified.

As always, the Board is very grateful for the continued efforts of the staff and members of WHA in increasing the visibility of, and advocating for, wildlife and wildlife health for the country. The Board will continue to provide updates to Members via the regular newsletters, reports and these Board summaries, as the many activities planned for this year move ahead.

For more information on anything that occurred during the meeting please contact your representative on the Board, the CEO (0438 755 078) or WHA Public Officer, Karen Magee (02 9960 6333).