

MEETING SUMMARY: 20th February 2025

The forty-third meeting (BM43) of WHA's Board took place in Canberra on 20th February 2025.

Members of the Board are:

- Richard Russell, Chairperson
- Cameron Bell, Funding Member, Agriculture Victoria (apology)
- Sharon Kolek, Funding Member, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (present virtually for items 3 & 5.1)
- Michelle Campbell-Ward, Individual Member Representative elected by the Individual Members
- Michelle Rodan, Animal Health Committee Representative
- Two organisations elected by the Organisational Members:
 - o Julien Grosmaire, Australian Veterinary Conversation Biologists
 - o Nicola Craddock, Zoo and Aquarium Association

This was the first meeting of the year for the first elected board of WHA as a public company limited by guarantee. Notable items discussed including the 2050 Vision strategic planning project, technology and Artificial Intelligence, government funding relating to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and board governance, structure and processes.

The 2050 Vision project has completed stakeholder consultation and work is underway drafting the strategic framework and strategic directions. The framework will be presented to the board for endorsement, at which time a Theory of Change will be developed by the Board's Strategic Working Group. Once endorsed, the CEO and Senior Management Team will draft a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to accompany the strategic framework. The organisation continues to work towards launching this new strategic framework from July 2025, coinciding with the end of [WildPLAN](#).

With technology advancements and increasing use of Artificial Intelligence around the globe, the board discussed the risks and opportunities of these tools for the organisation. The board agreed to in principle support of technology innovation and agreed to develop guidelines to help steer and embed innovative technological use across the organisation considering both risks and opportunities.

Updated information on the Australian government funding announcement for HPAI, of which \$7 million was committed to WHA was presented to the board. The understanding of the CEO at this time is that the funding will extend the current One Health Surveillance Initiative, also funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and ensure the organisation's current programs are sustained and enhanced until June 2027, with a focus on HPAI activities by the organisation. We are still awaiting the finalised contractual arrangements.

The current structure of the board and its committees was considered. The board agreed to advertise and recruit for new directors to fill the available positions and discussed the desired experience and attributes of new directors based on the current skills matrix. The Audit and Risk Committee will become the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and the Nominations Committee the Governance and Nominations Committee. The board will reconvene in the coming months to consider outputs from the WHA 2050 planning project.

The Chief Operating Officer and Senior Management Team were invited to present to the Board on the WHA programs, the 2024 achievements and the priorities for the year ahead.

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