



Minutes from General Meeting 3rd February 2016

7.10pm Meeting open

Present: Daniel Gordon, Matt Pelekanos, Sasha Vaynberg, David Reeve, Ruth Reeve, Chris Williams, Damien Rua, Troy Bell, Marisa Stewart, Nicola Banwell, Barbara Tudlik, David Young, Nigel Joyce, Adam Kerz, Ron Farmer

Apologies: Adon Taylor, Ian Elliott

Motion: to accept previous meetings minutes

Proposed, Dan Gordon

2nd, Sasha Vaynberg

Carried

Correspondence

none

Crag Reports

Coolum Cave – Ian Elliott

The cave has seen good numbers of climbers recently as the hot weather makes the shady cave a good option.

A number of climbers are holidaying on the Sunshine Coast and climbing at Coolum cave so it is attracting the climbing tourist market.

The storms over the past week have dropped 200 mm of rain on the mountain so the dry spell has come to an end and a number of routes will be wet, concentrating the climbing in the middle section of the cave.

The heat and humidity have also made conditions difficult but it is still possible to climb and conditions are not too bad if the wind is blowing into the cave.

Brooyar – Adon Taylor

Since our meeting with QPWS I have slowly been gathering data on all the bolts at Brooyar as requested by the rangers. Help would be appreciated.

President's Report – Dave Reeve

Trail Care:

Our Trail Care group headed up by Damo Rua are off to a flying start with work well under way on the Slider Gully access trail, and some effort put into stabilising sections of the new Flinders track which is starting to see heavy traffic.

The group spent the first session working with QPWS staff so that we now have a core

of volunteers who understand the principles of constructing tracks with low visual impact. Apart from the obvious value of the work that will be done, I see three advantages flowing from these events. Firstly, it sets a precedent for climbers working with the rangers on something they share as a common interest. Secondly, it raises awareness within the climbing community of the nitty-gritty of park management – in particular of the skill that goes into ‘presenting’ yet ‘preserving’. Thirdly, it serves as a template, and exemplar for other crags.

We have a new holding page on the website for trail care activities [here](#).

Nursery Cliffs – Ngungun:

Most climbers will be aware of the rocking column that forms part of the fun route, Denim, at the Nursery Cliffs. In the last few years QPWS have been receiving increasingly anxious reports with regards to the hazard posed by such a large block coming loose. It’s all credit to QPWS, that they consulted ACAQ rather than take to it with a pry-bar. It means a lot to me that we have land managers that understand the possibility of devaluing a route if you start prising bits off it.

Paul Amies and I took a look, and reckoned we could pin the block to the back wall in a very unobtrusive way, and so preserve the nature of the climb. This we did. You can read the technical report [here](#).

Ninderry Issues:

Sunshine Coast Council have expressed a desire to formalise climbing access at Ninderry along the lines of processes they have in place for MTB. In principle, I think a formal arrangement such as a memorandum of understanding is a good approach in that it is a building block that can stand, despite the comings and goings of the various actors on the stage. It is an especially good idea when dealing with local, as opposed to state government because, in the case of the former, local laws are a pretty inadequate framework to guide our interaction with the land manager.

However, thinking such an arrangement might be a good idea is one thing, getting it in place is quite another. Local councils, including SCC, are mentally paralysed by the growth of ‘risk’ sports on the public lands they manage. There exists a desire to sweep up the problem by enforcing all participants to be members of a peak body that provides insurance. To the administration this makes good sense, but, for the very same reasons the administration doesn’t ‘get’ how risk is a vital component of the sport of climbing, they likewise fail to appreciate ‘the freedom of the hills’ as one of its basic underpinnings. Both aspects arise from the expression of a free and independent spirit and cannot be curtailed without eviscerating the sport. It is naive to propose a scheme that cuts across basic ‘free and fair access’ and not expect problems further down the track. ACAQ would challenge the administration to show the legislative authority underpinning such a decision should it be made.

It is easy to see that the administration of SCC is indeed paralysed by the spectre of public liability. Council are in the process of amending local law to make climbing, by default, a proscribed activity on all estates they manage. Now, I understand that all local governments have local laws against random acts of dare-devilry such as jumping from bridges and the climbing of public structures, but to bundle up climbing and abseiling with such activities is both lazy and misinformed. Against this

background, it is clear why we are in for a period of wrangling with SCC.

I say wrangling, but I mean this in as positive a way as possible. Whilst I'm adamant that ACAQ is not going to commit future generations of climbers to agreements that curtail 'the freedom of the hills', I believe there is much that we can do to ease the fears of the land manager, and ultimately to build a solid basis for cooperation. I'd like to avoid the 'you can't', 'yes we can' type arguments and put more effort into our environmental stewardship programs, as well as building upon our professional, engineering approach to the maintenance of cliff infrastructure. Such an approach is good for the climbing community and it is good for the land managers.

Brooyar – meeting with QPWS

The guys at the QPWS Gympie office expressed the desire to get a better handle on climbing activities in the Brooyar State Forest, so a meeting with ACAQ exec and our crag rep was arranged on site. Nat Smith, SR with the Maleny Management Unit, attended to share his experience with managing climbing at Glasshouse. As was to be expected, the major concern was centred on the reliability of the bolted infrastructure.

We were able to demonstrate that in recent years, a lot of effort had gone into rebolting with glue-in rings, bringing most of the cliff infrastructure up to the EN 959 standard. However, we agreed that given the growth in popularity of the Brooyar crags, it made sense to bring Brooyar under the same exacting bolt by bolt audit we are establishing at Kangaroo Point. Adon Taylor has started on this process.

It was also agreed that we would start using the formal ACAQ paperwork system we been employing at Glasshouse to notify Gympie office of our intention to carry out maintenance. In effect, we want to take the process we have developed with Nat Smith at Glasshouse as a template for Brooyar.

As far as littering, and caring for the environment goes, it was agreed that climbers are an exemplary user group. We visited Black stump when it was in full swing, and it was good to be able to show first-hand what modern sport climbing consists of, and why we climbers place such a high amenity value on these crags – nature-based recreation writ large.

Amendment to the Nature Conservation Act:

I confess to a rather sad habit of, from time to time, looking to see what bills are going through the State Parliament. Normally, there is nothing much to excite my interest, except on the one occasion when, on the 27th October last year, Stephen Miles introduced a Bill to alter the Nature Conservation Act. Any attempt to tinker with this Act always has my full attention given it is the framework on which ACAQ depends to challenge decisions made by managers of the protected area estate.

In particular, it appeared that Regional Parks such as Flinders were to be returned to their original status of Conservation Park, but in the process, the explicit requirement to manage them for purposes of recreation was to be dropped. This raised a big red flag with us; sufficient for Chris Williams and myself to attend the presentation of the Bill to the Ag. and Env. Committee and whilst there to grab the ear of the Ben Klaassen the DDG of QPWS. We were invited to make a submission to the department, which we did. We also made a formal submission to the Ag. and Env.

Committee which you can read [here](#). When the Committee presented its review of the Bill in January they specifically acknowledged the validity of the point we made, and recommended that our proposed wording be adopted. If our amendment is taken up by the Minister, and there seems no reason why he wouldn't, it should make it through the second reading, and all those that climb at Flinders can breathe a sigh of relief.

Treasurer's Report – Chris Williams

Details are available on request, but in summary –

Income for Qtr: \$244.90
Expenditure for Qtr: \$376.01
Closing Balance: \$15,526.84

General Business

none

Bolting. If you are about to bolt a new route in SEQ, please contact the ACAQ regarding QPWS Operational Policy on bolting. All correspondence should be directed to Secretary@climb.org.au .

Next Meeting

To be announced

No further business.

8.45pm Meeting closed