



Minutes from General Meeting 27th April 2016

7.35pm Meeting open

Present: Sasha Vaynberg, David Reeve, Chris Williams, Ron Farmer, Scott Braithwaite, Neil Jenman, Adam Palmer, Eric Straw, Alex Turnbull, Lucy Stirling, Louis Oram, Mark Gamble

Apologies: Matt Pelekanos, Phil Box, Ruth Reeve, Adon Taylor

Motion: to accept previous meetings minutes

Proposed: Ron Farmer`

2nd, Sasha Vaynberg

Carried

Correspondence

none

Crag Reports

Brooyar – Adon Taylor

Brooyar is kicking along great. We had good numbers up here for the recent long weekends. I caught up with Paul Harris (Ranger) and he was surprised on how many people were up there. Was good for him to see first-hand just how popular it is. Climber etiquette was definitely outstanding. Got a couple of bits of hardware I'd like to replace.

President's Report – Dave Reeve

QORF Rock Climbing Forum March 3rd – a number of ACAQ members attended this forum. The meeting was attended by representatives from QPWS, ICC and SCC along with representatives from the climbing gyms and commercial operators. As was to be expected, much time was spent with the topic of conversation diving in and out of myriad rabbit holes. However, in my view this was a worthwhile exercise because the policy landscape is indeed complex, and no simple, one-size-fits-all policy is going to work. Ultimately, all stakeholders with an eye to policy need to be envisioning what the parks, and the outdoor recreation that takes place thereon, is going to look like in twenty years' time. I believe that QORF, and ACAQ through its membership of QORF, has a vital role in enabling smart public land policy; the stuff that looks beyond day to day detail, to sustaining the park system under the deluge of new found popularity.

Public Land Tenure by Local Government - I remain convinced that there are problems brewing for the outdoor recreation community due to the way in which local governments can hold land in fee simple without any legislative framework to establish its status as public land for the purposes of recreation. If we look at the situation in the United States we are seeing problems arising which, although the constitutional structures differ to what we have here, are surely signalling future troubles for us here in Queensland.

The problem is easy to see. In the United States, just like here in Queensland, the land tenures and legislative mechanisms controlling the management of 'public land' all hark back to earlier times when lawmakers, never in their wildest dreams, would have foreseen the value that future citizens would put on the 'worthless' lands as they became venues for novel and massively popular outdoor sports. The rapid transition from "no one caring" to vociferous stakeholder groups caring enough to exert political clout has blindsided both politicians and administrators alike. It is difficult enough to keep everyone happy all the time, but now in the US, it is especially difficult to enact legislation that would appear to retrospectively disadvantage one group compared with another – groups that have established claims to public land, while land managers were looking elsewhere. The inevitable consequence will be the failure to sustain both the recreational and conservation values of precious public assets.

At the moment we have but two folks masochistic enough to research this issue – Chris Williams and myself. What I'd like to see come out of this effort is a paper recommending amendments to the Land Act. If we have anyone out there with a perverse interest in administrative and constitutional law, we could use some help.

ACAQ Bolt Database – I believe we have finally got a lasso around the elephant in the room. You know the one. We're talking about the public liability elephant that bumbles about unseen in meetings between climbers and land managers, causing fears of public liability exposure to give rise to expressions of unwarranted control over the free-wheeling climbing spirit. At any meeting, it is always easy to agree that the thing we most want are policies that ensure the sustainability of climbing extending out for decades into the future, but the conversation is always stilted by the unspoken understanding that bolted infrastructure exposes the State to public liability.

Over the years ACAQ has worked hard to address this issue by demonstrating that the climbing community has a handle on the risk, and that the risk is constrained by the recent move to international standards such as EN 959. However, if the climbing community is to demonstrate that it really has a handle on the situation, someone somewhere needs to be doing the tedious auditing work that discharges duty of care for the integrity of the bolted infrastructure. As of April this year, that somebody is the body corporate, ACAQ.

We have developed a database that has the capability to track the maintenance of every bolt and every anchor on every route in Queensland. Because risk becomes elevated only when the traffic is likewise elevated, we are auditing the most popular routes first. Within the next month we will be notifying the community of a "bad bolt" reporting system for KP, which will allow any climber to photograph and report

dodgy infrastructure directly from their mobile phone. This data directly enters the system and is publicly viewable. We will be calling for volunteers to train in the auditing process.

Treasurer's Report – Chris Williams

Details are available on request, but in summary –

Income for Qtr: \$3,825.00
Expenditure for Qtr: \$294.96
Closing Balance: \$19,056.88

Agenda Item:

Adam Palmer tabled an item for discussion. Adam expressed the desire for management of climbing at Girraween NP to be formalised. I will attempt to summarise Adam's concerns below and put the problem into context.

There has long been a bold, adventure ethic embraced by several successive generations of climbers at the park. Over the years, this ethic has not only survived, but has been fiercely adopted/defended by the small numbers of new arrivals on the climbing scene.

However, in Adam's opinion, with the rapid growth of the sport, we are now seeing sport climbing culture beginning to contest these traditional values. At one level, this is a tension to be seen across all crags, and often represents little more than inter-generational friction, but in the particular case of Girraween, I believe Adam is correct in his concerns. Girraween provides a landscape and crag environment that is quite different to anywhere else in SEQ. It is not surprising therefore that the climbing ethic that has arisen over the past years aligns with the unique conservation and recreational values it offers.

At the meeting no voice was raised against the idea that ACAQ should work toward ensuring that the climbing style of Girraween was preserved. After all, this is no different to supporting the strict ethic that is in place at Frog.

All were agreed that the solution to the problem was one of education. If people are not aware of the ethics and values of the Girraween style, they will attempt to transform it to the only one they know. It was agreed that one 'gateway' at which the necessary knowledge can be imparted is for the uni clubs to make sure they have someone with Girraween experience accompany their trips. Adam agreed that there were climbers within the community who would be prepared to support such a venture.

It was agreed that the time was approaching where ACAQ was going to have to start formal discussions with QPWS over the future management of Girraween NP.

No formal motions were entered.

General Business

Scott Braithwaite raised his concerns that not enough was being done to engage the climbing community at all levels. He argued that there were opportunities to educate and inform on matters ranging from safety through to personal conduct at the crag that were being missed when folks transitioned from the gym to the outdoors. In the discussion that followed it was agreed that the gyms offered a unique and potentially effective channel for both increased membership and education.

No formal motions were entered.

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.

10:00pm Meeting closed