



# Friends of Grasslands - Re-scheduled AGM papers

Supporting native grassy ecosystems

15 April 2020

## Papers for FOG 2020 rescheduled Annual General Meeting, 22 April 2020

### Important message

Dear Friends of Grasslands Members

You are encouraged to attend our rescheduled Annual General Meeting **by Zoom** to celebrate a successful 2019, award Honorary Life Membership to Jamie Pittock, elect a new committee, and to provide guidance on the way ahead. **To register**, please contact our secretary Paul Archer: [paul.archer@fog.org.au](mailto:paul.archer@fog.org.au) who will provide you with details of how to join the AGM.

Please take the time to read these papers even if you do not intend to join us. If you are not attending, please let me know, particularly if you would like to stand for a committee position and/or wish to volunteer in some other role.

Geoff Robertson

[president@fog.org.au](mailto:president@fog.org.au)

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### Agenda for FOG 2020 Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 22 April 5.00-5.40pm by Zoom

#### Meeting agenda:

- Attendance and apologies
- Minutes of previous AGM, 19 Mar 2019 - (see page 4) and matters arising.
- Acceptance of Annual Accounts and Auditor's report. These were previously circulated and are again attached. If you have any queries please contact [treasurer@fog.org.au](mailto:treasurer@fog.org.au).
- Acceptance of Annual Report & President's Report (see this page).
- Notice of motion: This AGM accepts Jamie Pittock as a Friends of Grasslands (FOG) Honorary Life Member - to be moved by John Fitz Gerald (also see page 2)
- Election of office holders & committee members (for more information, see page 3)
- Round table on what FOG and members might do in Coronavirus times - We want to hear your ideas. To assist, please email your ideas (to [president@fog.org.au](mailto:president@fog.org.au)) and we can pre-circulate them before the meeting.

#### Annual Report & President's Report - Geoff Robertson

Last year was a very successful year, however we judge it. Its success was based on the contribution of our many members who are office holders, committee members and public officer, who manage our communications, events, work parties, advocacy, membership, sales and grants, and who participate in our events and contribute to our resources. FOG's success also depends on our many partnerships with agencies and other groups. All these are detailed in our Annual Report which was emailed in mid March. If you want to re-read it and not longer have it, you may download it from the following link (if you have any problems with this, please let me know):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/muxjdel1xm1lwdm/FOG%202019%20Annual%20Report.pdf?dl=0>

Many many people have made an enormous contribution and that makes the task of recognising individual contributions a difficult one. However, last year we awarded Ann Milligan a certificate of appreciation, and, with the agreement of our AGM, we will make Jamie Pittock an Honorary Life Member. The positive aspect of these awards is that the research into a person's background reveals how an individual may inspire and

set an example to the rest of us. I would like to thank both Ann and Jamie for their inspiration, leadership and contribution.

As flagged at our "Friends of Grasslands in the 2020s" forum, FOG's volunteer base, as distinct from membership, is seriously declining, as some of our more experienced volunteers partly or fully withdraw. Hence, we had embarked on a process to rejig our governance arrangements and to encourage some volunteers to take on more tasks, or newer members to step up. We had prepared a range of recommendations to change our governance arrangements which were included in the AGM papers emailed on 12 March. With the onset of Coronavirus, these recommendations need to be set aside for some time at least.

However, we still need volunteers to step up. Tasks for volunteers can be flexibly designed, and arranged around each volunteer. Some volunteers work many hours, some moderate hours and some few hours. It all contributes. To qualify as a volunteer you need some vision, a preparedness to make an on-going, but not indefinite, commitment. Being a volunteer can have many benefits. Often it is thought that volunteers need a background in ecology - that is definitely not the case.

After having celebrated FOG's 25th anniversary, we have now moved into a period of great uncertainty. Personally, I have found that recent events have profoundly affected me, creating a sense of loss and grieving. We have heard that drought, fire and Coronavirus have, each in turn, taught us profound lessons. I believe, on the positive side, each of these events show us that we need to take a more constructive path to quickly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to turn away from economic policies based on greed, economic inequality, reliance on greenhouse gas emissions and running down our biodiversity assets. However, and what I will more depressing is that, when "the economy springs back", the community is likely to forget these profound lessons and find "we cannot afford" reducing greenhouse gas emissions, restoring the environment and the rest. Hence I believe that we, who are concerned about our grassy ecosystems, must formulate our ideas on where to go from here.

In the meantime, we need to think about what FOG and its members should do now to support our grassy-ecosystems.

Finally, I would like to thank the many people who contribute their time and energy to FOG. These include our office holders: Paul and Janet; committee members: Rainer, Margaret, Andrew, Juliey, Maree and Ken; public officer: Andy; advocacy co-ordinator: Naarilla; web page: Richard; membership officer: Heather; sales, representation at Biodiversity Working Group and formerly membership officer: Sarah; on-ground-co-ordinators: Jamie, John & Linda; Facebook: Laura; and Ann for her work on the newsletter, eBulletin, and activities before she stood down from these roles. I would also like to thank the many people who give presentations to FOG and/or who work with FOG on its many projects; the many volunteers who assist in our on-ground work parties, and who organise and/or attend our many FOG events.

### **Notice of Motion**

#### **to accept Jamie Pittock as an Honorary Life Member**

**Motion:** This AGM accepts Jamie Pittock as a Friends of Grasslands (FOG) Honorary Life Member for his outstanding contribution to grassy ecosystems since the 1980s, his contribution to Friends of Grasslands and more broadly his leadership and public advocacy for Australian conservation.

#### **Statement in support:**

In support of this resolution, this AGM notes the following contributions made by Jamie Pittock:

- Jamie's contribution to grasslands commenced in the 1980s when he was an advocate for the conservation of natural temperate grasslands in Victoria.
- Subsequently he joined the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) where he undertook the leading role in arranging Commonwealth Government support for a number of very important grassland conservation projects. Amongst these was the grassy ecosystems grants program. FOG received one of these grants which led to its work on Old Cooma Common. Jamie's behind-the-scenes-support for FOG's project was an extremely valuable contribution to the project and laid the foundation for much of FOG's subsequent successful on-ground projects. In addition, with his encouragement, FOG and WWF formed a very close relationship which lasted many years and was extremely important to FOG in building its networks, credibility and advocacy work.

- In 2009 Jamie initiated FOG's partnership with the National Capital Authority for restoration of National Capital Lands. That project has been sustained and enormously successful. Jamie's role as organiser, co-ordinator, liaising with NCA, public advocate, team builder, technical expert, mentor, and his enormous personal commitment have epitomised what an ideal conservationist is, and grasslands are extremely fortunate to have him as a champion.
- His list of professional achievements and writings is truly outstanding and his appointment as Professor, Fenner School of Environment and Society, is truly deserved. In his professional life he shows the same openness and friendliness, preparedness to act as advisor and mentor - truly great personal qualities. His willingness to appear in the media and be a public advocate for grasslands and conservation are major contributions to Australian society.

### **Annual elections of office holders or ordinary committee members**

The AGM elects the FOG committee, including office holders (President, two vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer) and up to eight ordinary committee members. Financial members may be nominated to any position. A nomination requires a nominator and seconder and agreement by the nominee (who also may be the nominator or seconder). Under our rules, nominations should have been received by our returning officer, [paul.archer@fog.org.au](mailto:paul.archer@fog.org.au) by c.o.b. 10 March (which was extended to 15 March).

By that date nominations were received for the positions of:

President: Geoff Robertson, & Treasurer: Janet Russell

Ordinary committee members: Juliey Beckman, Maree Gilbert, Ken Hodgkinson, Margaret Ning, and Andrew Zelnik.

Rainer and Paul will not be re-standing for the 2000 committee. Hence, the positions of two vice presidents, secretary and some ordinary committee members are vacant. Please seriously consider nominating.

Normally the committee meets every two months. We propose to hold regular meetings by Zoom while the Coronavirus is around.

Apart from these we need assistance with the newsletter, eBulletin, and Facebook.

**Friends of Grasslands Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday 19 March 2019  
Draft Minutes**

The meeting was held at Lena Karmel Lodge, 26 Barry Drive, Acton ACT with President Geoff Robertson in the chair, opening at 6:05pm. The following papers had previously been circulated: Agenda, draft Minutes of the 2018 AGM and a collation of annual reports.

**Attendance and apologies**

*Present*

Alan Ford, Andrew Zelnik, Andy Russell, Geoff Robertson, Janet Russell, Jamie Pittock, John Fitz Gerald, Juliey Beckman, Margaret Ning, Michael Bedingfield, Paul Archer (minute taker), Rainer Rehwinkel, Sarah Sharp, Stephen Horn, Sarah Aylott, Maree Gilbert, David Johnson, Arminel Ryan, Jayne Roberts, Cathy Robertson, Ashton Robinson

*Apologies*

Sue Archer, Rosemary Blemings, Richard Bomford, Tim Booth, Matt Cook, Roger Farrow, Bob Gay, Elena Guarracono, Naarilla Hirsch, Libby Keen, Christine Kendrick, Lorraine Kennedy, Mira Kwasik, Jennifer Liney, Helen & Gus Macartney, Virginia McCoy, Libby McCutchan, Paul McPherson, Ann Milligan, John Nutt, Pamela Orr, Jane Paul, Leon & Kay Pietsch, Shirley Pipitone, Tony Robinson, David Shorthouse, Christopher Watson, Catherine Watt, Trish & Jim Williamson, Brigitta Wimmer, Katerina Ziesak Ken Hodgkinson, Kim & Yola Pullen, Shirley & Warwick Daniels, Barbara Payne, Cathy Robertson, Kat Ng, Linda Spinaze, Naarilla Hirsch, Helga Mossop, Dietlind Sommer.

**Minutes of 2018 AGM**

The draft minutes were accepted without change. Moved Paul Archer, seconded Janet Russell.

**Matters arising from minutes**

There were no matters arising from the 2018 AGM minutes.

**Annual report**

The annual report, as previously circulated, was tabled. People responsible for the various areas of the report were invited to address the meeting and be available for questions and discussion. The auditor's report and annual account papers were attached to the agenda.

**Election of office bearers**

The President acknowledged those members who were standing down from the committee. John Fitz Gerald agreed to act as Returning Officer. The outcome of the election follows.

*President* - Geoff Robertson was nominated by Paul Archer and seconded by Janet Russell. Declared elected unopposed.

*Vice Presidents* - There were no nominations for the two vice-President positions. These positions remained vacant.

*Secretary* - Paul Archer was nominated by Geoff Robertson and seconded by Andrew Zelnik. Declared elected unopposed.

*Treasurer* - Janet Russell was nominated by Geoff Robertson and seconded by Paul Archer. Declared elected unopposed.

*Committee*

The following FOG members were elected unopposed: Juliey Beckman, Maree Gilbert, Ken Hodgkinson , Margaret Ning, Rainer Rehwinkel

Andrew Zelnik

**Motions on notice**

No motions on notice had been received.

**Close**

The meeting closed at 7:15pm