

IFA/AFG ACT and Region - Annual Meeting 2020

1 September 2020

5.30 – 7pm, virtually

Present

Tony Bartlett, Cris Brack, Stuart Davey, Rachael Dawes, Matt De Jong, Bob Gordon (IFA/AFG National President), Kevin Harding (IFA/AFG National Vice-President), Richard Hart, Peter Kanowski (Co-Chair), Jiaqin Ling, Stephen Midgley, Helen Murray Jacquie Martin (IFA/ AFG CEO), Mark Parsons, Geoff Roberts (Co-Chair), John Sedgley, Tony Scherl, Maddie Sheldon, Stephen Thomas, Brian Turner, Sandra Verlade, Kim Wells,

1. Apologies

Yulia Cuthbertson, Sadanandan Nambiar

2. Minutes from 2019 Annual Meeting, and Committee Meetings 2019-20

Minor corrections noted to 2019 Meeting Minutes (typographical errors; nomenclature for IFA/AFG publications)

3. Co-Chairs' Report

- i. Peter and Geoff reiterated that it had been and remained a challenging year for all members, with the bushfires, hail-storm, and COVID 19.
- ii. Nevertheless, the committee met regularly (as per minutes circulated with agenda), for which the Co-Chairs thanked committee members.
- iii. The only field trip which proceeded amongst those planned was the IFSA-organised visit to Tumut region plantations in September, which the IFA/ AFG supported; thanks to Yulia Cuthbertson and Tony Bartlett.
- iv. As noted in the Co-Chairs' report, a number of submissions were made in relation to urban tree issues, with particular thanks to Cris Brack.
- v. The IFA/AFG actively engaged with the process for the development of the former AFS/ CSIRO Yarralumla site, with particular thanks to Kim Wells and Brian Turner.
- vi. Members acknowledge the passing of longstanding members Tony Fearnside, Bob Newman, and Mike Slee. We recognize their strong engagement in the IFA and contributions to the profession, and offer our condolences to their families.

4. President's and Vice-President's Updates

Bob Gordon noted:

- a. It has been a difficult year for the IFA, and it will run at a loss this year.
- b. There have been a number of submissions made to national and state enquiries, particularly those focused on bushfires. Bob particularly thanked the Bushfire Committee for its work on these.
- c. The IFA/AFG is testing new names.
- d. The next IFA/AFG conference is planned for Launceston in the second half of 2021.

Kevin Harding noted that, through greater outreach associated with webinars, many members have felt more connected to the IFA/ AFG over the past year. He also noted the active efforts to include the small growers in the topics of these webinars and related activities.

5. CEO's Report

Jacqui Martin spoke to a set of slides (attached), noting particularly:

- a. the updating of the objectives of the IFA, and the 5 pillars of the Strategic Plan

- b. the higher levels of member satisfaction reported in 2019-20
- c. the relatively stable level of membership, although this needs to grow.
- d. that the priorities of the Secretariat were those set by the Board, and that additional staff were helping to give effect to those priorities.

In discussion of the reports at Items 4 and 5:

- e. Stephen Thomas noted that the new opportunities realized from COVID, in terms of wider virtual engagement, could be continued subsequently. Bob and Jacqui confirmed this was the intention.
- f. Stephen Midgley thanked those who prepared the position statements from the IFA/AFG, as a valuable source of information for those outside the profession.

6. Updates from Committee members

a. Education – Cris Brack

- i. The new B Environment & Sustainability degree that started at Fenner last year was proving popular, with more than 200 students enrolled. There has been an increase in student numbers in Fenner.
- ii. Masters students are continuing at reasonable number.
- iii. *Australian Forestry* has been publishing research student abstracts, as a strategy for profiling students' work.
- iv. ANU enrolment numbers 2020 (2019) were:
 - Master of Forestry 10 (13)
 - Master of Environment 51 (51)
 - Master of Environmental Science 23 (27)
 - Bachelor of Environment and Society 270+

b. ACT Urban Trees – Rachael Dawes

- i. The Urban Forest Strategy had been released for consultation, until 10 September. There has been a good response to this Strategy.
- ii. There has been an active planting across Canberra, with ~25,000 new trees being put into Canberra.
- iii. The Redwood forests at Pialligo are owned by the NCA but managed by Defence. There may be opportunities for the IFA/AFG to support efforts to raise the profile of the Redwoods and improve their condition.

In the context of the Urban Forest Strategy and related activities, Stephen Thomas noted the importance of managing trees, not just planting them.

c. Students – Jiaqian Li

- i. ANU students continued to participate actively in IFSA events, although travel plans had been curtailed in 2020.
- ii. There will be an online careers event in October, with pre-recorded videos. There will be a series of videos, followed by panel discussions.

d. Future Foresters – Maddie Shelton

- i. There have been three new members in two new states represented in the Future Forester members. They have been focusing on the student engagement and social media.

e. Heritage – Kim Wells

- i. CSIRO will be vacating the Australian Forestry School site, and there is a plan to redevelop the area. The developer, Oakstand, had engaged the IFA/AFG and Yarralumla Residents Association (and others) in an ongoing consultation process. Those interested in participating in the consultation should contact Kim. There are a range of options for the site, including a possible high school, commercial leases/research Hub or high-end residential.

Stephen Thomas noted that he has been engaged to identify the important trees on the site. There does not appear that there is a risk to the heritage buildings or trees at the moment.

7. Items tabled by members

Kim Wells noted:

- a. There are 10-15 boxes from the Bruce office currently stored in the weighbridge shed. There needs to be determine what is in the boxes, and that there is appropriate housing of the material. Peter Kanowski and Stuart Davey will liaise with Kim Wells and Peter Langdon to determine what is needed to be kept.
- b. There is a continuing need to improve the flow of information from the Board through the Secretariat and Divisions to members. He noted the role of *The Forester* in that flow.

In response to the second of Kim's points, Jacqui updated the meeting plans for *The Forester* (publication of which had been delayed over the last year prior to the appointment of staff, but was now back on schedule); Bob and Peter noted the regular Board briefings for Divisional Chairs, and undertook to reflect on ways in which members could best be kept informed.

8. Election of ACT Chair and Committee 2020 – 2021

- a. Peter thanked Matt de Jong for recently joining the committee.
- b. He assumed that the current members were willing to continue in their roles on the Committee, and invited any others interested to join too.
- c. Co-Chairs – Peter and Geoff were willing continue in their roles as Co-Chairs

9. Other Business

- a. The Namadgi Field trip has been rescheduled to the 19th of September .
- b. Kim Wells and the Yarralumla Residents Association have organized a "Westbourne Woods" walk for the CSIRO site on 11th October.
- c. Matt de Jong advised that a \$40 Million grant program (individual grants between \$1-\$2 Million) has been released to assist with processing facilities impacted by the fires. More information at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/forestry/bushfirerecovery>
- d. Tony Bartlett advised that the Regional Fire Plan will require review in the near future.
- e. Jacqui reminded members of the IFA/AFG national AGM on 16 October (5pm).