



National Parks Association of the ACT Inc.

conservation education protection

Submission for 2024 – 25 ACT Government budget

Introduction

In 2024 the National Parks Association ACT Inc (NPA ACT) has over 440 members, and nearly 7,000 Facebook followers. For over 60 years our members have worked to protect and promote parks and reserves across the ACT. For more information about our activities go to <https://www.npaact.org.au/>

Our walks and programs have introduced members and guests to nature reserves across the ACT, including Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla and Mulligans Flat nature reserves. Our work parties have removed fencing from former farmland in Namadgi and assisted the Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) bushfire recovery works, including restoring affected sphagnum bog areas in Namadgi. In consultation with PCS, we have undertaken a major survey of Rosenberg goannas. All this work has been undertaken by NPA ACT members as volunteers.

NPA ACT contribution to Wellbeing in the ACT

In its 60 years of operation, NPA ACT has made a significant contribution to the Wellbeing of the ACT community.

As an ABS 2001 report describes, multiple factors underpin wellbeing, one of which is the natural environment. NPA ACT provides a range of opportunities for members and guests to interact with the natural environment. These include walks, work parties, and research projects. For those unable to visit the reserves we have monthly talks about environmental activities and issues. We have a quarterly magazine, the *NPA Bulletin*, with articles and photos about activities in the parks. Our social media pages and website provide a vast array of photos for those who want to explore the reserves online.

NPA ACT contributes significantly to the Environment and Climate Wellbeing Domain. Funding from the ACT Government can help achieve the aspirations for wellbeing in this area.

What has been the in-kind contribution of the NPA ACT to Wellbeing and ACT parks and reserves in 2023?

Below is an estimate of the hours and days our key volunteer members have spent coordinating our activities in the last 12 months.

Walks program.

Activities undertaken by Outings convenors – 30 days.

- Key tasks include coordinating the weekly walks and works program, published online at our website and in the *Bulletin* 4 times a year; liaising with walks leaders and preparing reports for Committee. In 2023 a major project was setting up an online calendar for our new website launched in December 2023.

Walks leaders - 140 days a year.

- Tasks include planning and leading walks, kayak trips and bike rides, providing information to the convenor, liaising with participants and writing reports on walks. Note: the time calculated is for leaders only, not participants.

Work parties - leaders and participants – 475 hours.

- Key tasks include organizing and overseeing work parties in consultation with PCS. Seventy members were involved over the year.

Promotions and Outreach activities – 580 hours

- Bulletin – 4 issues a year. Work involves design, editing and production – **90 hours.**
- Social media and promotion and outreach events – **350 hours**
- Graphic design and photography – **40 hours**
- Writing for publications and media – **100 hours**

Volunteer Administration support – Treasurer, Secretary, Public Officer – 66 days a year.

- Tasks include managing finances including book sales; organizing and supporting monthly Committee meetings; preparing monthly financial reports; organizing annual audit; reports and updates for ACNC; working on membership database upgrade. Average of 6 days a month for 11 months.

Using the ACT Government rate of \$41.72 per hour for volunteers (the rate used in Environment grant applications when calculating in-kind support), the calculation of in-kind support provided by NPA ACT members across the above activities in 2023 is as follows:

Walks program – Convenor – 30 days – \$9,510 (at a daily rate of \$41.72 per hour for 7.6 hours) this is \$317.00 per day x 30 days.

Leaders – 140 days using above calculations (x\$317.00) – **\$44,380.**

Work parties – 475 hours x \$41.72 – **\$19,817.**

Promotions and Outreach – 580 hours x \$41.72 – **\$24,197.60**

Volunteer administration support - 66 days x\$ 317.00 - **\$20,922.**

These figures indicate that for these activities alone NPA ACT contributed nearly \$120,000 in in-kind support to wellbeing and parks and reserves in the ACT in 2023.

Our other volunteer contributions to conservation activities across the ACT are also significant. For example, volunteers involved in our goanna research program over the summer of 2022 – 23 on Mount Ainslie and Mount Majura logged 1,525 hours. At the ACT rate for volunteers this was an in-kind contribution of \$63,623 to conservation activities across the ACT.

These figures do not include the significant contribution of time from the committee and members in preparing grant submissions, responding to requests from ACT government for information and submissions, ongoing liaison with EPSDD and PCS; engagement with the Fenner School on scholarships and citizen science projects, organizing monthly meetings and more.

What NPA ACT needs from the 2024-25 ACT budget: to continue our contribution to Wellbeing in the ACT, and our support for ACT parks and reserves, we need funding for operational costs.

The support from the ACT Government 2024 – 25 budget will enable NPA ACT to continue to provide a significant contribution towards wellbeing in the ACT and to support the ongoing protection and management of ACT parks and reserves.

Rosemary Hollow

President, National Parks Association ACT Inc.

1 March 2024