



The Wilderness Society Ltd 2025 Annual General Meeting

Minutes (Confirmed by Meeting Convenor)

Wednesday, 26 November 2025, 6.30pm AEDT

Hosted at 130 Davey Street, Hobart - Member attendance by Vero Voting webinar

Members in attendance: 14 Members live attendees around the country

Eligible Proxies (in attendance): 42 eligible proxies confirmed

Apologies: 2 Members offered apologies for the meeting

Meeting Convenor: Amanda Branley, Deputy Convenor, The Wilderness Society Ltd Board

Minutes: Jo Stephen

Timekeeper/Moderator: Christine Zangari

Company Secretary: Matt Brennan

In Attendance by Invitation of the Board: Ross Burt (William Buck Audit)

1. Welcome and Meeting Opening

Matt Brennan, The Wilderness Society CEO, addressed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending The Wilderness Society Ltd (TWS Ltd) 2025 Annual General Meeting. Matt confirmed that there was a sufficient quorum of registered Members for the entire meeting before acknowledging the Traditional Custodians, past and present, of the land at the various sites where the meeting was taking place.

The Wilderness Society had made arrangements consistent with the law for this AGM to be held by webinar, enabling all Members to safely participate in the event remotely. A summary of the meeting's format and the process was provided for attending Members.

As TWS Ltd Convenor, Karl Tischler, was an apology to the meeting, a process in line with Clause 21 of the Constitution was outlined for an alternative Director, Deputy Convenor Amanda Branley, to be elected by fellow attending Directors as the meeting's Convenor. This process was endorsed by attending Directors and Amanda declared the meeting open at 6.32pm, noted 2 apologies received for the meeting, confirmed 42 eligible general proxies were received and noted in attendance at the meeting was Ross Burt of William Buck Auditors.

Meeting Process Overview

Amanda then summarised the agenda as advertised by Matt Brennan, Company Secretary, and outlined TWS Ltd's reporting requirements as a charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. As a Public Company Limited by Guarantee, there is no requirement for Members to vote to approve the TWS Ltd Financial Statements or Directors' Report, however, time was allocated for questions and answers at particular agenda items, with Members able to provide questions online.

2. Minutes of the Previous General Meetings

In accordance with The Wilderness Society Ltd's Constitution, Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting, as confirmed by the meeting's facilitator, were made available on The Wilderness Society website within a month of the meeting.

Those Minutes were provided to Wilderness Society Members for information.

3. Reports from The Wilderness Society Ltd Board

Directors' Report

The Directors' Report from the 2024/25 Financial Year includes the following acknowledgement from the past year, where Wilderness Society Members have helped achieve:

- ❖ a very significant win in defence of threatened species;
- ❖ the creation of NSW's Great Koala National Park;
- ❖ winning a landmark legal case against Forestry Tasmania and the protection of 39,000ha of Lutruwita / Tasmania's forests;
- ❖ sustained pressure on big supermarkets to act on deforestation;
- ❖ the delivery in Victoria of three new national parks; and
- ❖ the rejuvenation and re-opening of our spiritual home, 130 Davey Street, Nipaluna / Hobart.

On behalf of the Board, Amanda thanked the entire Wilderness Society team for their commitment and thanks to all Members for believing in what we are tasked to achieve.

The full Directors' Report, along with further highlights, is included in the Annual Review for the year available on The Wilderness Society website.

Financial Overview

Andrew Barker, Director and Convenor of the Finance Audit Risk and Compliance Committee, presented an overview of the 2024/25 Financial Statements on behalf of the Board.

Points of note included:

- ❖ For the 2024/2025 financial year, The Wilderness Society ran close to breakeven, delivering a consolidated deficit of \$259k.
- ❖ The result represents a significant improvement on the previous year, reflecting sound financial management, steady income performance, and a measured approach to expenditure across the organisation.
- ❖ The improved outcome was achieved while implementing a revised fundraising strategy, including the pause of the Wilderness Defender face to face program and a focus on longer term investment in bequests and philanthropy.
- ❖ Despite the pause in f2f and a challenging economic climate, revenue remained stable at \$11.0m, with donations increasing by almost \$300k.
- ❖ Bequests, whilst down on prior year, contributed \$793k and the pipeline remains strong. We thank all our donors and bequestors for their generosity, and we are

incredibly grateful for this support.

- ❖ Investment income was stable at \$0.4m
- ❖ Whilst we continued to grow our investment in our core organisational campaign plan by 4% to \$6.4m, we were able to reduce Total Expenses by almost \$1.4m, reflecting careful oversight and reduced fundraising expenses.
- ❖ Prudent financial management over the past five years sees the overall equity and liquidity position remaining healthy, providing a great foundation for the ongoing work of achieving The Wilderness Society's purpose.

The meeting was opened for questions from attending Members, with Members invited to submit questions via the online webinar question function. No questions were forthcoming on the financials.

4. Chief Executive Officer Report

Matt Brennan presented the CEO Report, reflecting on the 2024-25 financial year. Key points of the presentation included:

- ❖ This was a year defined by courage and persistence—the two qualities that have always shaped this movement.
- ❖ The Wilderness Society organisation has shifted from reaction to rhythm, where we are no longer only responding to threats, rather setting the tempo for change.
- ❖ We have strengthened our strategic foundations—linking protection, accountability and people power in a way that makes change both durable and democratic -- which means coupling community mobilisation with legal action, science with storytelling, and advocacy with the vigilance of citizen monitoring through tools like Watch on Nature.
- ❖ Next year, the Wilderness Society turns fifty, not just a milestone—it's a moment to recommit.
- ❖ The landscapes we defend and the laws we seek to reform will not be secured in a single term of government or one burst of public attention, they will endure only through collective, long-term effort.
- ❖ We are grateful to every Member, donor, volunteer and partner who has stood with us.
- ❖ The work ahead is complex, but we know how to do it—together, with persistence, creativity and courage.

The meeting recognised the Wilderness Society's outgoing National Campaigns Director, Amelia Young, who finished up with the organisation this year, leaving an outstanding legacy for the organisation and wild places, including the delivery of landmark conservation outcomes across forests, rivers, oceans and cultural landscapes, strengthened partnerships with First Nations communities, and implementing new tools and strategies that continue to shape our work today.

The meeting was opened for questions from attending Members. There were no questions for the Meeting.

Acknowledgement and warm thanks were given for the time and energy offered in all communities around the country to support the Wilderness Society movement. The full CEO Report is included in the 2024/25 Annual Review available on The Wilderness Society website.

Presentation of a campaign highlights report from the 2024-25 year followed. Key points of the presentation included:

- ❖ The South Australian government formally cancelled oil and gas exploration leases across the 3.6-million-hectare Munga-Thirri / Simpson Desert National Park. This is the culmination of a long campaign to make sure Australia's largest national park is protected in practice, not just on paper.
- ❖ In March, more than 460 people gathered in Kalamunda and online to break the world record for the most people holding tree pose—a joyful show of strength and solidarity for these ancient forests and their Noongar Custodians. Together, we're standing firm for the jarrah and all it sustains.
- ❖ This year marked a major turning point for Victoria's forests, with the state's five Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) finally terminated—ending decades of destructive logging deals between state and federal governments.
 - The Wilderness Society has worked for years to reach this milestone, advocating through every consultation and keeping public attention on the damage these outdated agreements caused to forests and wildlife.
- ❖ In December, mapping analysis revealed that more than 39,000 hectares of Tasmania's protected native forests—some of the island's most biodiverse landscapes—had been earmarked for potential logging under a proposed government reclassification.
- ❖ Wilderness Society campaigners and volunteer citizen scientists, using *Watch on Nature* and on-ground surveys, helped expose the scale of the threat, showing that even reserved and conservation land was at risk.
 - Critical Update: Victory for Tasmania's reserved forests (August 2025)
 - After strong public pressure and expert analysis from citizen scientists and conservation groups, the Tasmanian Liberal government announced that its plans to open protected forests for logging would not proceed. The Wilderness Society welcomed the decision as a win for transparency, science and Tasmania's unique wild places.
- ❖ The federal government's decision to reject the Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 (PEP 11) brought long-awaited relief for NSW coastal communities from Newcastle to the Central Coast, who have fought for years to keep methane gas drilling out of their waters. The Wilderness Society stood alongside local groups, surfers, Traditional Owners and residents to oppose the project, raising the alarm on the environmental and climate risks, and calling for the end of offshore oil and gas exploration in Australian waters.
- ❖ Protecting nature at scale means fixing the systems that keep destroying it. This year we took governments and corporations to task—from the Federal Court to the boardroom floor. We exposed regulatory failure, fought for stronger laws and showed that public accountability works. Through legal action, policy advocacy and citizen monitoring, we pushed for lasting change in how Australia governs, values and safeguards its natural world.
 - Noted that the Wilderness Society has recently taken Sustainable Forestry Tasmania to court over management of critical swift parrot habitat.
- ❖ This year, we kept pressure on Australia's offshore oil and gas regulator, NOPSEMA, to hold major companies accountable for cleaning up their industrial waste in the ocean -- we exposed plans by ExxonMobil and Woodside to

abandon massive steel structures in the Bass Strait, releasing expert legal advice confirming that leaving this waste behind could breach international law.

- ❖ Duties case against Federal Environment Minister was a massive campaign strategy for new laws - resonated with Members and we won!
 - The outcome guarantees protection for hundreds of threatened species and confirms that existing recovery plans must be treated as ongoing, not expired.
- ❖ The weekend after the election, we put a full page ad in the Weekend Australian. The message was simple: Australians expect the new government to do its job—that means protecting the moss carpeted forests, mangroves and bushlands that Aussie wildlife call home.
- ❖ This year, more than 10,000 Wilderness Society supporters called on Coles and Woolworths to take deforestation off their shelves, demanding that everyday products like beef, packaging and timber pallets no longer come from the destruction of forests and bushland.
- ❖ We have continued to anchor ourselves with First Nations communities, being guided by First Nations leadership and connection to Country.
- ❖ In 2024 we celebrated the Wilderness Society's *Environment Award for Children's Literature* 30th anniversary winners -- the occasion marked three decades of recognising stories that help young Australians see, love and protect the natural world.
- ❖ Also proudly awarding the Karajia Award for Children's Literature, which honours First Nations authors and illustrators sharing stories of Country, culture and kinship.
- ❖ Remembered the 20 year anniversary of the Gunns 20 case where woodchipping giant Gunns Limited filed a \$6.3 million lawsuit against 17 individuals and three conservation organisations—including the Wilderness Society—for their efforts to protect Lutruwita / Tasmania's old growth forests.
 - Very recently we reopened the Tasmanian Campaign Centre following extensive refurbishment with a launch and sharing of courageous stories.
- ❖ Acknowledged all Campaign and Organising staff, and those from Fundraising, Communications, Data and Member support teams -- our machine working together is critical in providing great and lasting results.
- ❖ These highlights from the Wilderness Society's campaign work would not have been possible without the support of our Members, donors, supporters, and volunteers, thank you all.

The meeting was opened for questions from attending Members.

- Question from Ian Clarke: Will there be further webinars on the Watch on Nature GIS system?
 - Yes, the Watch on Nature system is dependent on volunteers to participate and/or learn about it.
 - Further engagement in this space will happen in the new year - our GIS Campaigner, Rachel Fletcher, will be advised of Member interest in learning more and invites will go out to Members and via our website and/or emails in due course.
 - Members were invited to reach out directly if they are particularly interested in knowing more about this program and its application.

There were no other questions from attending Members.

5. The Wilderness Society Ltd Board of Directors

Matt Brennan, Company Secretary, provided an explanation of the direct ballot Election of Directors process, as provided for under the Constitution, explaining that Directors this year were elected by direct ballot in a process leading up to the Annual General Meeting. The nomination and election process are designed to ensure broad geographic representation with elected Directors coming from at least four of the following six regions: Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales; Queensland; Northern Territory and South Australia; Tasmania; Victoria; and Western Australia.

Early this year, Natalie Warren from the ACT/NSW region resigned as Elected Director creating one casual vacancy which remained unfilled for the year. Elected Directors retiring in 2025 were Michael Gillam from Queensland and Lisa Roberts from Victoria, with both eligible to renominate.

Continuing Elected Directors were Amanda Branley, Bettina Pidcock, Andrew Barker and Bill Doyle, the Board currently has two skills-based appointed Directors, Assoc Prof Jen Martin and Karl Tischler.

Therefore, in 2025, three (3) Director positions were open for election.

Results Declaration | 2025 Election of Directors

The following eligible nominees offered themselves for election in 2025:

- Kristina Koenig from Tasmania
- Lisa Roberts from Victoria
- Michael Gillam from Queensland

All candidates received ballots in the Election of Directors, allowing them to fill the available positions. With thanks to the 164 Members who participated, the results of the election were: 149 votes - Lisa Roberts; 146 votes - Kristina Koenig; and 137 votes - Michael Gillam.

Ross Burt, Scrutineer for the Election as appointed by the Board, confirmed the counting of votes as correct and that there was nothing further to report.

Congratulations were offered to the newly elected Directors of the Wilderness Society Ltd Board, declared as Lisa Roberts, Kristina Koenig and Michael Gillam. These Directors joined the continuing Directors on the Board.

The entire complement of the Board of The Wilderness Society Ltd is

- Amanda Branley - Western Australia
- Andrew Barker - Victoria
- Bettina Pidcock - Tasmania
- Bill Doyle - South Australia
- Jen Martin (Appointed) - Victoria
- Karl Tischler (Appointed) - New South Wales
- Kristina Koenig - Tasmania
- Lisa Roberts - Victoria
- Michael Gillam - Queensland

Congratulations to the newly elected Directors was noted. Thanks was given to all Directors for their voluntary contributions and commitment to the governance and

processes of The Wilderness Society.

6. Honorary Life Membership Awards 2025

The meeting noted that two Honorary Life Member nominations were received in 2025, endorsed by The Wilderness Society Ltd Board and confirmed as:

- **Amelia Young** -- nominated by TWS Victoria
 - With over 20 years of service, Amelia's most recent role was as the National Campaigns Director (NCD) of the Wilderness Society. Prior to that she served in a range of roles, including the Victorian Campaigns Manager, Victorian Forest Campaigner, Campaigner and a Wilderness Society volunteer; and
- **Stephen Mattingley** -- nominated by TWS Tasmania
 - TWS Tasmania, Stephen contributed significantly to the Wilderness Society for 40 years. He played a pivotal role in TWS campaigns to protect the Tasmanian wilderness. That he did this work as a volunteer speaks volumes for him as a person. He embodied TWS values every day of his life with no expectation of financial reward. At the recent Volunteering Tasmania Awards, Stephen was granted a special recognition and (very touching) standing ovation. This Honorary Life Membership is awarded posthumously.

The nominations were endorsed by The Wilderness Society Ltd Board in October 2025.

The meeting offered congratulations to Amelia and Stephen's significant contributions to the organisation over many years.

7. Meeting Close

In closing, Amanda thanked the process team, all Members, volunteers and staff for their attendance and contributions around the country, and for being involved in the governance of The Wilderness Society. Thanks were also given to Vero Voting for supporting The Wilderness Society Ltd AGM governance processes again in 2025.

Members were reminded of the annual Wilderness Society Members' Forum providing the opportunity for Member discussion with the Board, the most recent having been held in September, another will be scheduled for 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm AEDT.
