

MEETING SUMMARY: 22nd November 2023

The thirty seventh meeting (BM37) of WHA's Board took place on 22nd November 2023 via virtual meeting.

Members of the Board are:

- Peter Bridgewater (Chair), Chair
- Cameron Bell (Deputy Chair), Funding Member, Agriculture Victoria
- Sharon Kolek, Funding Member, Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer
- Michelle Campbell-Ward, Individual Member Representative elected by the Individual Members
- Andrew Pearce, nominee of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Apology)
- Three organisations elected by the Organisational Members:
 - Leanne Wicker, Wildlife Disease Association Australasia (Apology)
 - Julien Grosmaire, Australian Veterinary Conversation Biologists
 - Nicola Craddock, Zoo and Aquarium Association
- Rodney Vile, Invited Member, Environment Agency
- James Newman, Invited Active Observer (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water).

As well as routine business, the board endorsed the Marketing and Communications plan and were updated on operational activities within the organisation, including the key results of feedback received as part of the 2023 culture survey. The organisation currently benefits from a strong culture from the perspective of all staff, but there will always be opportunities identified for growth, and those priorities will be a focus into 2024.

As part of WHA's transition from an incorporated association under the Associated Incorporations Act (2009) in NSW to a Public Company Limited by Guarantee, the board were updated that the member information session was held in October and the transition resolutions would be proposed at this year's annual general meeting for member endorsement.

At BM36, the board agreed to form a board-led working group as an opportunity to develop a transformative strategic plan to take WHA into the future. The chair of the working group provided an update of progress of activities as part of this project.

Given the current global situation of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), the board discussed on WHA's role and leadership in this space. Multiple perspectives were provided based on the board's experience and it was agreed that risks to the organisation could establish if WHA doesn't continue to proactively engage in activities, a very large number of which are underway. A challenge for WHA is the ability to balance the sustained continued effort with the current funding and resourcing available. Australia's response to HPAI should be underpinned by a One Health-type approach and individual, ecosystem and economical risk awareness could form part of WHA's activities in this space. The board will continue to engage with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and Ministers to keep advocating the risks provided by HPAI, and the value of WHA's involvement in preparedness and response activities as appropriate.

For more information on anything that occurred during the meeting please contact your representative on the board, the CEO (0438 755 078) or WHA Public Officer, Karen Magee (02 9960 6333).