

FOTPIN General Meeting – why?

Dear Fellow Fotpin Members,

My name is Mervyn Aston, a retired agricultural scientist and university lecturer living in Hawker. I live near and walk on the Pinnacles Reserve almost every day. I am interested in natural bushland, its protection and its restoration and am really enthused about the biodiversity of the Pinnacle Park.

I thought that by joining FOTPIN I would have the opportunity to meet like minded people, to be able to talk with them about the park and to participate in conservation and restoration of the area. The activities of volunteer parkcare as laid out on the Territories and Municipal Services Volunteer Parkcare site

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/play/pcl/get_out_there/volunteering/parkcare appealed to me.

FOTPIN activities to date have been overwhelmingly concerned with weed destruction with some survey work earlier and in the future, an interesting grass restoration experiment and a series of excellent walks run by the interesting and informative Rosemary Blemings. There has been no meeting with general members, no discussion of our aims and what we want to achieve on the Pinnacle in fact nothing that includes the general membership, we never meet each other. It appears that around 75% of the membership are not involved with FOTPIN activities as they are now run.

While the website calls us a volunteer parkcare group there is nothing in the draft management rules that either refers to this or even links us in any way with the TAMS system or our related associates. The listed goals and aims read more like those of a national biosecurity protection company rather than those belonging to a parkcare group. However I do believe the intent is that we should be a Volunteer Parkcare Group.

It seemed, therefore, that we should as a matter of urgency

1. Confirm that we are a Volunteer Parkcare Group and that our activities will match those of other ACT groups,
2. Address the issue of getting more members actively involved and of being able to meet regularly and to participate in planning and activities.

The best way to address some of these issues is to establish a constitution. This is a feature of all the best and democratic small clubs and groups.

We have unfortunately without much discussion, it seems, decided to run the club with a management committee so that we as general members are told what is going to happen and in what we will participate, This is an unfortunate decision as it leads to a further lack of active involvement by the general club membership.

The members of the current management committee are hard working and have the interests of the Pinnacle at heart although they have neglected to take any action in asking the general membership what they want. It has been hard to actually know what is happening because the minutes do not contain much background information and the associated reports and information which are associated are not attached, but I

am informed can be viewed at the secretaries house. The newsletter by the convenor is useful but does not always coincide with matters in the meeting minutes.

I am informed that a lot of discussion and management occurs outside of meetings and is not always reported in the meetings. For example I was pleasantly surprised to learn that some of the committee were looking at what to plant on the Pinnacle but there had been no attempt to involve the membership in the discussion.

There almost appears to be something secret in the way things run as is exemplified by the unwillingness to share members names and contacts with other group members. Something which normally happens in most small clubs and groups.

Perhaps we need to go back to management as is usually specified and run in most club constitutions.

The various motions to consider what I have been talking about have been listed in previous correspondence. It is not my intention to take up your time discussing these now as they will be discussed at the meeting but I hope from the above discussion their intention is clear. I just want to see us all meeting and working together on something which presumably is of interest to us all.

I do encourage you to come along and express your views.

I would welcome hearing from other FOTPIN members even if it is just to abuse me or if you have any questions.

My email address is mervyn.aston@netspeed.com.au

my phone number is 0401 261 150 or you can drop something in my letterbox at 63 Ambalindum Street Hawker or even drop in for a chat or you can simply accost me if you see me on the Pinnacle. I usually walk with an overfriendly Queensland Blue cattle dog.

Best regards,
Mervyn Aston