

Minutes of the BRAid General Meeting held on Friday November 7, 2025, 2 pm at DOC office, 31 Nga Mahi Road, Sockburn, Christchurch

The Chairman, Nick Ledgard, welcomed those present: Sonny Whitelaw, Sue Mardon, Grant Davey and Emily Wium (ARRG), Frances Schmechel (ECan), Bec Simpson (Boffa Miskell) and Sara Gerard (ECan councilor).

Apologies: Ellery Mayence, Edith Smith, Val Clemens, Peter Howden, Donna Field.

Minutes of last GM (February 28th 2025) were confirmed as a true and correct record.

Matters Arising: All 8 action items were completed and/or are covered below.

Financial. Sue presented the Income and Expenditure report for 1/07/25 to 3/11/2025. These are available on the BRAid website. Cash Flow for the period was -\$11,938 as the year's funding was received prior to 1 July. Our brought forward balance at the start of the financial year was \$32,527, with that at the end of the period being \$20,590. Our major expense is for Manager wages, which are provisionally secured for 2025-26.

Resolved: 'That the financial accounts be received and approved'.

Sue/Nick. Carried

Membership. We currently have 148 members (registered with contact details), with 331 persons on our email list. Subscriptions are no longer required, but donations are welcomed, and currently exceed what was made from subscriptions.

Outreach / Manager's report. Sonny's report is the same as presented to the AGM – available on our website. A vote of sincere thanks to Sonny for her work, without which BRAid would not exist.

July 9 2025 Conference. This is the highlight of BRAid's year, and was the usual success, as reported in the Managers report. 164 people were present, 20-25% of which were first-time attendees. All feedback was positive. Plans are already underway for the 2026 conference on July 8. Major thanks are due to Sonny Whitelaw for the organizing this year's symposium, and to a joint ECan/DOC donation of \$2000 for financial support.

July 10 black-fronted tern (BFT) workshop. This was a success with around 30 participants. As a result, the first draft of a best management practice (BMP) has been written by Ellery M and been sent around for comment and feedback. The final version will be completed by mid-2026.

ECan / DOC Braided River projects. Frances reported on the projects, the budget for which is now ended. However, there are Biodiversity Operational funds directed at priority areas, most of which involve braided rivers. The main points made by Frances's are included under the river reports covered in the Monitoring section below.

Monitoring

River reports.

- Waiau / Toa - Clarence. Focus is on island creation/maintenance and weed control – assisted by LINZ (Boffa Miskell) and WMIL. There is also a student study on impact of chick shelters.
- Waiau / Upha. The main emphasis here is on the Sharks Tooth island, once again well used by BFT.
- Hurunui. Not targeted this year.
- Ashley-Rakahuri. Grant D and Emily W updated the well-monitored situation on this river. Weeds are noticeably absent this season, but this will not continue without assistance from good floods. Wrybill breeding has been good this year, with a few nests lost but most chicks headed towards fledging. BFT and

BBG were present in good colonies, but these have not persisted to date. The one reasonable BFT colony was 60% predated early on. There is on-going SBBG nest/egg control down at the estuary. The annual survey is taking place on Nov 15. Dave Kelly (UC) is coordinating proposed research on the Ashley-Rakahuri directed at feral cats, plus a separate student PhD study (topic to be decided) – making use of ARRG data-sets.

- Waimakariri. Weed control in the upper catchment is ongoing, implementing the BM-written strategy. Comment was made on the rapid down-river spread of Russell lupin, the extent of which could be monitored more closely. There was a brief discussion on BRaid's concern about the small (but increasing?) SBBG presence and the potential for its control.

Action items: *Nick to discuss Russell lupin monitoring with Will T-H of ECan

*Nick to follow-up with Frances relative to a special project to control SBBG in upper Waimakariri

- Ashburton. Annual survey on November 9. A report from Edith updated on the current situation. As part of new bridge work, a raised island has been made for bird nesting. On-going weed and predator control in both upper and lower river. Plus control of SBBG.
- Rakaia and Rangitata. Funding for the considerable work carried out in previous years has largely ceased, with little current bird monitoring. But ongoing weed and predator control in upper Rakaia, plus monitoring of birds in hapuas.
- Orari. Opihi / Opuha. Orari river survey on Nov 8. Further discussion about workshop focusing on smaller S. Canterbury rivers.

Action: Edith S to explore possibility of a local seminar to promote/discuss local management initiatives on these smaller S. Canterbury rivers.

- **General Business**

- Awards. Gold medal award made to Grant D at AGM. First Gold award made.
- Bird of the Year. BRaid joined the Pukorokoro-Miranda Naturalist's Trust's in campaign for wrybill – finished in 17th position.
- BRaid conference 2026. Planning underway for July 8 2026.
- 3D bird models. Brief discussion about how these could be better used for promotion / awareness.

Action: Nick to explore this further.

- Willow/poplar seedling invasions. Discussion document written by ECan. Frances updated on the increased awareness, ECan attention and operational control activity. Willow use alongside rivers being re-evaluated. Major hot-spots in N Canterbury.
- Deputation to ECan Council promoting better collaboration between braided river engineering works and other river environmental managers.

Action: Nick to contact ECan Customer Services to ask for presentation opportunity.

- Climate change. Sonny commented on recent National Risk Assessment meeting, where dangers to freshwater systems were highlighted. Agreed mod-high risk, which no new policy could be expected to avert.

- **Date for next meeting.** Planned for February 26, 2026.

Action: Nick / Sonny to organise

- **Close of Meeting.** 3.30pm.

Action items.

1. **Upper Waimakariri weed and SBBG control:** *Nick to discuss Russell lupin monitoring with Will T-H of ECan
*Nick to follow-up with Frances relative to a special project to control SBBG in upper Waimakariri
2. **S. Canterbury rivers workshop:** Edith S to explore possibility of a local seminar to promote/discuss local management initiatives on these smaller S. Canterbury rivers.
3. **3D bird models:** Nick to explore how to use these for promotion / awareness purposes.
4. **Deputation to ECan council:** Nick to contact ECan Customer Services to ask for presentation opportunity.
5. **Next meeting:** Sonny / Nick to organize a BRaid meeting in late February.