



NPAQ Annual Report 2023

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President's Report

Dear Members,

On reflection, the last twelve months has been a year of positive change. Our new CEO, Chris Thomas, started in October last year, and has brought enthusiasm, energy, and significant experience to the role. Chris's valuable contribution has been very effective, and given NPAQ additional resources to both initiate new, and further develop existing relationships, especially with government. This has allowed us to actively identify and pursue a range of opportunities relevant to our mission and values. Our new Strategic and Business Plans Chris has developed with Council have been useful tools to provide focus and clarify priorities. We regularly track our progress on their implementation.

A clear and high priority focus for our advocacy work has been on tracking and supporting the progress of the Protected Area Strategy, where the government has committed 17% of the State to be in Protected Areas by 2030. This is a substantial increase from the current 8.3%, and one that will require systematic acquisition of large areas for nature conservation.

Central to this and other environmental opportunities is the cessation of logging of native vegetation in all SEQ native State Forests by the end of 2024, coupled with the transition of several State Forests to Protected Areas. This aligns with our advocacy work on the Granite Belt and Yabba Links proposals, where we have developed a well-researched case for expanding the National Park estate in these areas with multiple benefits. These proposals are getting traction within the government, and we look forward to substantive progress in the next year.

NPAQ were the only environmental organisation invited to have a representative on the State Government's Native Timber Advisory Panel, which was formed to give advice to the government on the future management of State Forests. Although the panel no longer functions, it was a valuable opportunity to connect with the Forestry industry, understand their issues, and advocate for conservation-based outcomes.

Our annual dinner in June was a very successful event. It was wonderful to see such a diverse mix of people attending, including senior people from QPWS, several of our long-term members who remain active and passionate, Councillors, Committee members, supporters, and family members of our founders. A talk given by Dr Sally Driml on "Revealing the invisible economic values of nature" was one of the many highlights of the evening. Another was the video from our patron, The Hon Jeanette Young, Governor of Queensland, where she expressed her appreciation of NPAQ's work and her connection with nature. We are already planning the annual dinner for 2024.

Our active involvement with the formal Alliance of the Conservation and Tourism sectors has continued to be an effective way of communicating our joint advocacy for additional National Parks, plus appropriate resources to ensure they are well managed. A current focus is our input to the 2032 Olympic & Paralympic Games legacy plan, which is occupying much government attention. As this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, we want our unique natural environment and biodiversity to be an essential and strong element of the legacy after the Games.

The growing and contentious issue of mountain biking in National Parks has been a focus of research that will result in a national policy agreed to by all National Park Associations across the various Australian jurisdictions. Dr Simone Maynard (our Conservation Manager) has been leading this work and helped to run a well-attended seminar recently on this issue which involved three presentations on the science of biking impacts on the environment, government policy and mountain biking organisation's policy.

Simone is also leading a major piece of research with Dr Sally Driml on identifying and quantifying the full value of ecosystem services provided by National Parks. It will form the basis of a strong case to the government for further investment in the critical asset that underpins so much of our health and well-being.

Our program of Activity Days for Kids in Parks has been successfully developed over the past year, with 8 events in diverse locations including Moreton Bay, Binna Burra, Bribie Island, and natural areas on the outskirts of Brisbane. We aim to further expand this program next year, with involvement of park rangers. Our Operations Manager, Samantha Smith, has been responsible for designing and delivering this program, which is a great testament to her enthusiasm and ability to deliver. Samantha is also responsible for NPAQ's quarterly Protected magazine, and organising our events including members meetings, the mountain biking seminar, the annual dinner, and the Romeo Lahey lecture.

Last year the Romeo Lahey lecture by Emeritus Professor Marc Hockings was on the theme 'Quality counts – making protected areas effective, equitable and successful'. It was a timely and excellent summary of the role of the IUCN's Green List, and how it can make park management more effective.

This year, the lecture was given by Prof Hugh Possingham, Queensland's former Chief Scientist, on 'The Future of Biodiversity Conservation' which generated much interest. The topic is extremely relevant to Queensland's Protected Areas and how our approach needs to evolve. Hugh's depth of expertise and insights made for a compelling presentation. Over 60 people attended, with excellent time for informal chats afterward.

Our Council and Committees continue to operate effectively in line with good governance. We are very fortunate to have members with a depth of skills and experience in key areas including marketing and communications, finance, advocacy, governance and activities. Sincere appreciation for the ongoing input of our committed volunteers – our organisation could not function without you.

The Activities Committee continues its long-standing work of planning and leading regular walks, birdwatching activities, the Easter camp event, plus regular on-ground working bees to manage weeds and rehabilitate the vegetation in D'Aguilar National Park, on the outskirts of Brisbane.

Four Councillors are resigning this year: Peter Klein, Steve Noakes, Christine Hatton and Emily Griffiths. We will miss their thoughtful and generous contributions. A special mention to Steve Noakes, Chair Binna Burra lodge and our Vice-President, who has given valuable support to NPAQ even though he has been based in Indonesia these past two years, including donations of great raffle prizes at our events (2 nights at Binna Burra's SkyLodges!).

A sincere thank you to all our members and supporters for your ongoing support – it is essential to our continued operations and effectiveness. I look forward to the year ahead which is full of opportunities to have an even greater impact.

Susanne Cooper, NPAQ President



Advocacy

Committee Members

- Russell Watkinson (Chair)
- Susanne Cooper
- Alan Chenoweth
- Simon Cavendish
- David Morgans
- Glenn Tozer
- Chris Thomas
- Simone Maynard

Year in review

An updated Advocacy Plan for 2023 was developed to guide the activities of the committee. This was derived from committee members.

The committee has decided to re-format its meetings to focus on issues that have strategic significance and provide opportunities to be more effective with advocacy. A list of priority topics has been developed as shown below:

- Building alliances with the Health /Agriculture / Regional Business sectors
- Engagement with Indigenous groups and connecting with Regional Queensland
- Generating public support for the Protected Area estate
- Private sector partnerships (RACQ/ caravan club/outdoor clothing companies/etc)
- Policy on park fees / revenue options
- Non-Government / Opposition relationships
- Maximising benefits from the Conservation/Tourism Alliance
- Building the case for further investment in National Parks
- Ensuring effective PAS Implementation
- Values based Management Framework and Management Plans

A discussion on the first topic proved useful and future meetings will work through this agenda.

Following the release of Report Card 2 on implementation of Queensland's Protected Areas Strategy, (PAS) the Advocacy Committee has again pressed for targets to be set so that progress can be assessed in a meaningful way. Discussions have been held on land acquisition priorities and the need for additional funding to progress the PAS to ensure effective implementation. Queensland still lags behind other states with only 8.3% of the land mass secured as protected area and progress continues to be slow towards achieving the Government's target of 17% of Queensland as protected area.

With Brisbane now hosting the Olympics and Paralympics in 2032, the committee has continued to work with our associates through the Tourism Alliance to argue for an enhanced program so that the State can showcase our marvellous national parks to international visitors during and post Olympics.

The committee has commenced forming relations with the new Minister and her office through our CEO and President. The minister seems receptive to our organisation, and we believe we continue to be viewed in a positive way as we seek to provide constructive criticism and input.

We have been able to finalise the Granite Belt proposal and are now progressing action through talks with the Department and various stakeholders.

We have continued to develop our positive relationship with the tourism sector through the Tourism and Conservation Alliance and believe this has enhanced our ability to influence the Government. We understand that our joint approach had some influence on the improved budget outcome this year. Whilst we recognise that some members will remain wary of such a relationship, we do have much in common in wanting to see additional and

improved management of national parks. There has been some limited expansion of membership of the Tourism and Conservation Alliance to include a wider representation of members from both sectors.

The Investment Plan for national parks developed by consultants for Pew Trusts has been discussed with Pew. Following these discussions, it was decided to initiate a separate study that seeks to better quantify the values of National Parks as the basis for making the case for further investment by the Government. Once completed we hope this report will provide the basis for working together to better quantify the economic and wellbeing values of ecosystem services provided by protected areas, as another argument for better funding.

The push to allow mountain biking into national parks continues as this sector grows in numbers and the committee has actively resisted this as initiatives come to our attention. A successful seminar was held on Mountain Biking in National Parks which attracted a good attendance. We are leading an initiative under the auspices of NPAC to develop a national Mountain Biking in National parks Policy and expect this will be completed and approved this year. We continue to seek engagement with Bicycle Queensland to seek common ground around cycling in national parks.

The Native Timber Advisory Panel has been closed by the Government. This proved to be a difficult and frustrating exercise and some time was spent in providing input to its final report. It is unclear whether there will be any significant transfer of native forests to national parks.

Initiatives

We have continued to engage with DES on its Values Based Management Framework for developing, implementing and monitoring park management plans. We have now received the planned program for development of Management Plans and Management Statements and will seek members input to assist in providing comment.

Proposals to develop a Granite Belt regional protected area were finalised after lengthy discussions with local stakeholders. We hope to discuss it directly with the new Minister soon.

We have continued to support the “Friends of Parks Queensland” initiative developed by Jessica Lovegrove-Walsh which is now up and running. We are active on the executive committee through one of the committee members.

Submissions

We continue to press that the Wangetti long distance walking trail give emphasis to “nature-based “cycling rather than mountain biking. The Government maintains a commitment to this initiative.

Final representations were made regarding the Cooloola ecotourism proposal.



Activities

Committee members

- Frank Freeman (Convener)
- Mary Anne Ryan (Secretary)
- Laurelle Lowry (Treasurer)
- Ian Peacock (Bird Outing Convener)
- Len Lowry (Equipment Manager)

Volunteers/Activity Leaders

- Geraldine Buchanan
- Angus McElnea (Boombana Revegetation Project)
- Cathy Duffy

With the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, activities went ahead pretty-well unhindered in 2022-23. In total, 34 activities were posted on the website of which 6 were cancelled. In total, 28 activities went ahead attended by 259 members and 12 non-members.

Day Activities

During the year, 8-day walks were proposed but 2 were cancelled. 4 of 6-day walks were in national parks while one of the others was in a BCC park and the other along a section of the BVRT. As well, there was a cycling event in Redlands City while a second cycling activity was cancelled. Cancellations were the result of too few nominations.

Bird Activities

Of the 11 proposed bird activities, 2 were cancelled, one because of the weather and the other because of illness. Bird Group activities are consistently popular with over 20 people in attendance on some occasions. The details of all sightings were submitted regularly to eBird Australia in keeping with the citizen-science objectives of the group.

The week-long camp in Crow's Nest enabled members to enjoy a wide variety of birds in various habitats in the area. Literally hundreds of birds were spotted and identified, and these numbers recorded in eBird Australia. In addition, there was plenty of opportunity to socialise and do a bit of sight-seeing in the area.

Revegetation Project

Of the 10 proposed working bees, 9 went ahead (1 cancelled because of poor weather) making steady progress clearing exotic weeds from the Boombana and Jollys Lookout areas of D'Aguilar National Park and replanting with native plants of the area. In total, 161.5 hours were expended doing this important work.

New Year Twilight Walk

Eighteen people attended this event, making it the most popular, single activity for the year. Members see it as an opportunity to chat and catch-up with old friends as well as meet new members in a relaxed atmosphere.

Volunteers

Sincere thanks to the volunteer leaders who organise and lead these activities. They give generously of their time and knowledge to raise people's awareness of national parks and their importance in maintaining a balance between the natural environment and the built environment. Thank you, one and all, for your dedication.



Marketing & Communications

MCMEE Members

- Emily Griffiths
- Leilani Johanson (resigned Oct 2023)
- Rodrigo Diaz
- Samantha Smith
- Peter Klein (Chair – resigned July 2023)

Targeted, effective and engaging communication with members and supporters is fundamental to achieving NPAQ's purpose. Strengthening our public profile, by ensuring messages associated with issues concerning Queensland's protected areas reach a wider audience, is essential for building a sustainable organisation. This year we continued to review and improve our communications, working with the time and budget available.

Protected

Our quarterly magazine, *Protected*, continued this year and provides in-depth articles on national parks and nature conservation issues, and includes reflections on why parks should be valued. There have also been regular scientific additions to the publication. In addition to contributions from staff, members and supporters, articles are sourced from experts in their fields, including ecologists and well-known scientists. 2,029 recipients received a digital copy and 145 members received a print edition.

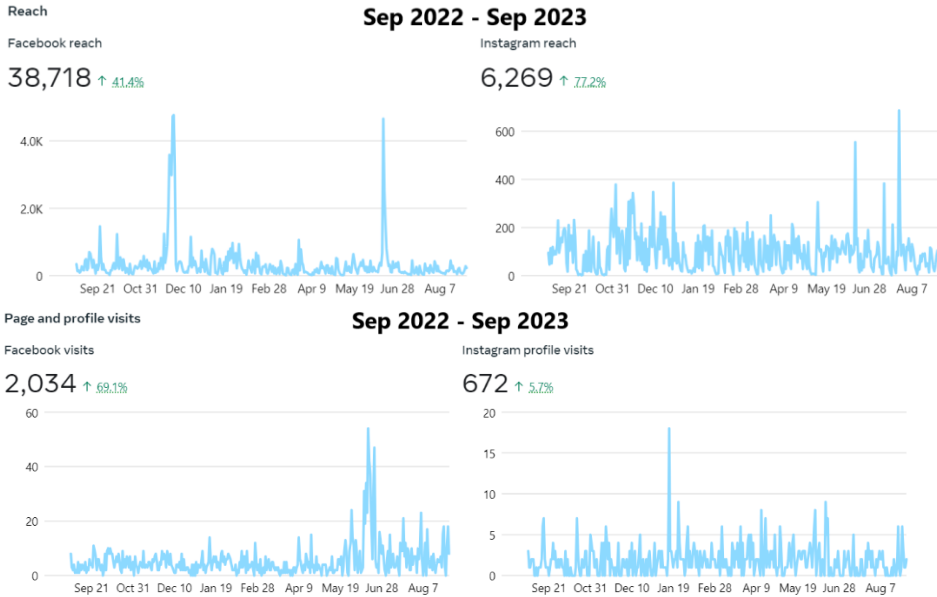
Neck of the Woods

Our e-bulletin, Neck of the Woods, has continued to be distributed monthly this year by email, to 337 subscribed members. The e-bulletin typically includes up-to-date information about issues relating to protected areas, as well as highlighting items of interest in the news, upcoming activities, Association news, and events of interest.

Social Media

There has been significant growth over all NPAQ social media channels between September 1st 2022 to September 1st 2023. The Facebook page has seen a follower growth of 5.2%, Instagram followers have grown by 12.7% and LinkedIn followers have seen the largest growth at 54.1%.

Below are illustrations of the analytics from September 1st 2022, to September 1st 2023.



Membership

NPAQ has 279 active financial members at the time of writing this report with an additional 14 with overdue payments pending, meaning a total of 293 active members. 35 members have resigned for various personal reasons.

NPAQ has 1,820 NPAQ mail list subscribers (NOTW/Protected and events), which is a decrease of 230 subscribers over 12 months. The NPAQ social media channels have a total of 9,037 followers divided as follows: Facebook has 6,614 followers (an increase of 5.2%), Instagram has 1,694 followers (an increase of 12.7%) and LinkedIn has 729 followers (an increase of 54.1%).

By combining the social media and mailing list supporters, the total number of online supporters has been calculated to be 10,857* which is an overall increase of 5.3%

**It is important to note that the total number of supporters may include duplication across platforms and may not be an accurate indication of overall supporter numbers.*

Honorary Life Members

NPAQ acknowledges the exceptional service provided by our Honorary Life Members: John Hill, Vivienne Bourne, Helen Lucas, Vivienne Cumming, Ailsa Rutherford, Brian Egan, Annitta Hearle, Suzette Porter, Alan Gunn, Wendy Bell, Arthur Baker, Claire Pattison, Nell Land, Audrey Williams, B Tebble, Allan Brown, Margaret Compton, Tom Cowlshaw, Merle Gynther, Barbara Brice, Laura McDiarmid, Shirley Traves, Nola Jefferys, Andrew Lahey, Norma Hoad, Barbara Stuart, June Stoodley, Berenice Harris, Lily Rees, Heather Mott, Dudley Dagg, Russell Gardner, Gary Hardy, Ann Neale, George Glytsos, Ann Tracey, Debra Marwedel, Jim Stebbins, Ray Taylor, Robin Hyde, Ronald Farmer, Ross Clelland, Ruth Gabriel, Ruth Read, Tony Groom.

Staff

In line with strategic and financial goals, our staffing structure ensures that all resources expended achieve the greatest possible outcomes and are maximised in priority areas. Although what is achieved is largely dependent on our staff numbers, the organisation also has a responsibility to manage its budget. Staff numbers have grown this year to include a Chief Executive Officer and recently a Marketing and Communications Manager. NPAQ now has a total paid staff of 5, including a full time CEO, three part time roles (Operations Manager, Conservation Manager and Marketing Communications Manager) as well as a contracted accountant.

Volunteers

Members and other volunteers undertake a significant proportion of NPAQ's work. Twenty-four volunteers contributed thousands of hours in areas such as: activity leading; conservation work; provision of professional or technical support; library, archives, governance, or strategic support; advocacy; assistance at events, including manning promotional and educational stalls; committee roles; and Council roles. See page 12 for a full list of volunteers.

Engagement

The following in person events were hosted this year:

- Government Open House in October 2022
- Romeo Lahey Lecture in November 2022
- Families for the Forests in January 2023
- Members' meetings in March and July 2023
- Green Heart Fair in May 2023
- Annual Dinner in June 2023
- Mountain Biking Seminar in June 2023
- Romeo Lahey lecture in September 2023
- Kids in National Parks activity days
 - December 20th 2022
 - April 11th and 15th 2023
 - June 10th 2023
 - July 1st, 5th, and 7th 2023
 - September 2nd 2023
 - September 29th and 30th 2023

Governance

Committee members

- Clare Birnie (Chair)
- Joanna Osborn
- Chris Thomas
- Simon Cavendish

This year the Council resolved to combine the functions of the Finance and Investment Committee and the Governance Committee to form the Finance and Governance Committee (FG Committee). The FG's role is to assist the NPAQ Council and Executive to fulfil their governance and oversight responsibilities in relation to financial reporting, risk management, internal controls, external audit, corporate governance and compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and codes. The Committee's main achievement in FY23 has been to review investments, allowing for the sale of shares to assist in operations, whilst taking steps to maximise the value of our remaining portfolio during a fluctuating market. Integral steps have also been taken towards finalising an investment policy to serve NPAQ in the years to come.

Financial Report

I present the Treasurer's report and audited financial statements for the 2022 – 2023 financial year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our NPAQ Staff, Board and members for their support and contributions that makes my role an enjoyable one. I look forward to the positive changes we can make as an association in the next 12 months.

Thank you,

Clare Birnie, NPAQ Hon. Treasurer

Financial Audit (excerpt)

Review of Operations

The deficit of the Association for the financial year after total other comprehensive income is (\$120,508) (2022: reported a deficit after total comprehensive income of \$149,426). A review of operations of the Association during the year found that the Association continued to engage in its principal activity the results of which are disclosed in the attached financial statements.

Significant Changes in State of Affairs

No significant changes in the Association's state of affairs occurred during the financial year.

Principal Activity

The principal activity of the Association during the financial year was to act as a non-profit Association promoting preservation, expansion and good management of national parks and other forms of protected areas in Queensland.

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OF LOSS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Members Contributions	14,285	14,715
Investment Income	85,187	68,083
Profit on sale of investments	51,134	0
Donations and Fundraising	26,259	17,439
Grants	11,158	-
Bequests	20,000	-
Other Income	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE	208,023	100,237
EXPENSES		
Members Expenses	(7,219)	(3,462)
Core Focus Expenditure	(7,001)	(7,087)
Administration Expenses	(26,849)	(25,967)
Fundraising Expenses	(7,241)	(6,312)
Depreciation Expenditure	(7,038)	(5,241)
Employment Expenses	(234,717)	(114,233)
Property Expenses	(13,107)	(12,542)
Loss on sale of investments	-	(945)
TOTAL EXPENSES	(303,171)	(175,789)
Surplus/ (deficit) before income tax	(95,147)	(75,552)
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus/ (deficit) after income tax	(95,147)	(75,552)
Unrealized loss/gain on Financial Assets	(25,361)	(73,874)
Total Other Comprehensive Income	(120,508)	(149,426)
Total Comprehensive Income	(120,508)	(149,426)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

The full NPAQ financial audit is available for download on the NPAQ website: <https://npaq.org.au/agm-2023/>

NPAQ People

Executive

Susanne Cooper - President
Steve Noakes – Vice President
Clare Birnie – Hon. Treasurer
Joanna Osborn – Hon. Secretary

Committee Chairs

Frank Freeman
Russell Watkinson
Samantha Smith (acting)
Clare Birnie

Councillors

Glenn Tozer
Rod Diaz
Emily Griffiths
Simon Cavendish
Christine Hatton

Staff

Chris Thomas
Simone Maynard
Samantha Smith
Sara Byers
Glenys Wilkinson

Volunteers

- Susanne Cooper
- Russell Watkinson
- Alan Chenoweth
- Simon Cavendish
- David Morgans
- Glenn Tozer
- Joanna Osborn
- Clare Birnie
- Frank Freeman
- Steve Noakes
- Mary Anne Ryan
- Laurelle Lowry
- Ian Peacock
- Len Lowry
- Geraldine Buchanan
- Cathy Duffy
- Angus McElnea
- Emily Griffiths
- Christine Hatton
- Leilani Johanson
- Rodrigo Diaz
- Janice Monroe
- Natsumi Ishii
- Peter Klein

Conservation Partners

- Errol Bennett
- Donald & Wilma Carlson
- Jan Aldenhoven & Glen Cuttrruthers
- Kenneth Sampson
- Athol & Maria Lester
- Mike Sackett
- Kenneth & Susan Sketcher
- Susanne & Peter Cooper
- Flora Bennett
- Mary Petr
- David Cassells
- Ross Webster
- John Hudson
- Judith Hunter
- Adam Kilvert
- Alan Chenoweth
- Marilyn Shrapnel
- Perry Finn
- Richard Riles
- Sarah Bradley
- Tony O'Brien
- Vaughan Kippers

Donors

- Adrienne Dougal
- Aileen Jacob
- Alan Chenoweth
- Aleisha Mackail
- Alice Harris
- Andrew Farr
- Andy De Francis
- Ann Tracey
- Anonymous (John Hudson)
- Athol Brown
- Bill Begg
- Bronwyn Davies
- Bruce Gall
- Catherine London
- Christine Hatton
- Clare Birnie
- Clayton Ive
- Darren Kindleysides
- David Ball
- Deborah Knott
- Debra Huntley
- Debra Marwedel
- Dianne Clifford
- Dr Ben Yap - Vetpartners Group
- Eberhard Moll
- Elise Petersen
- Elizabeth Jarvis
- Glenn Tozer
- Graham Riddell
- Helen Jeremy
- Helen Lucas
- Ian and Cathy Herbert
- Ian Tedder
- James Heath
- Jan and Leon Misfeld
- Jan Livingston
- Jason Catlett
- Jeannie Rice
- Jillian Randle
- Johannes Biala
- John Bestevaar
- John Frois
- Judith Somerville

- June Bennett
- Justin Fowler
- Kay McIntosh
- Kerriane Peacan
- Laurelle Lowry
- Layne Mostyn
- Lorraine Davis
- Lyn Mitchell
- Mark Swyer
- Mary Maher
- Maureen McLellan
- Michael Askin
- Monique Bond
- Nancy Bartrim
- Olaf Heeremans
- Peter Binks
- Peter Kennedy
- Peter Lello
- Peter Ridgewell
- Petrina Hendry
- Philip Marwedel
- Richard Kirwood
- Robert Clemens
- Robin and Ursula Maffey
- Rod Chiapello
- Rowena Lester
- Russell Gardner
- Russell Watkinson
- Sally Brown
- Sammy Logothetis
- Sarah Bradley
- Shannon Claridge - Wildflowers Reading
- Shannon Krebs
- Simon Lloyd
- Susanne Cooper
- Suzette Porter
- Tracy West
- Vaughan Kippers
- Wendy Auton
- William McDonald
- Wilma Carlson

Vales

NPAQ is saddened by the passing of the following members:

- *Life Member Ailsa Rutherford, joined NPAQ in 1963*
- *Member Maureen Egan, joined NPAQ in 1976*

We send our heartfelt condolences to their friends and families.



9/36 Finchley St, Milton

QLD, 4064

07 3367 0878

admin@npaq.org.au

www.npaq.org.au