

President's Report to the 2017 AGM of Coochiemudlo Island Coastcare Inc

I welcome you all to the fourth Annual General Meeting of Coochiemudlo Island Coastcare Incorporated. I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Quandamooka people, of elders past and present.

A special welcome to our guest speaker, Rob Friend the principal architect of the 2004 Land Management Plan which we fondly refer to as "our bible," Councillor Lance Hewlett and Sheena

It's been a demanding year on many fronts for our volunteer organisation as we've tried to meet the challenges and address the environmental issues confronting our island in accordance with the Objectives of our Constitution. I'd like to pay special tribute to members of the management committee who've shared the workload & contributed so much time and energy to furthering our cause at meetings both internally and with external organisations.

I'm delighted that you've all nominated for re-election and we've managed to talk Ian Shapcott on-board as well. We're indebted to Ian for the countless hours spent developing a discussion paper on Vegetation Management in the lead-up to Council's Integrated Weed Management Plan. To our volunteers, whether working on the dunes, weeding, providing feedback – we couldn't do it without you. You provide the moral strength and guidance. Special thanks to Lance our supportive Councillor for our monthly meetings and I'm so pleased to report that positive outcomes re-inforce the benefits of this regular interaction.

Coastcare's new website and regular news bulletins from membership secretary, Lois Toop have added a new communication platform. Sincere thanks Lois for your dedication creating this great community resource. If you haven't explored the site, might I encourage you to do so. Along with Heather Smith and Pam Reed, Lois has also nurtured our Junior Ranger program – encouraging our youth to care for our island guarantees its future.

I'd like to congratulate our Junior Rangers for their efforts weeding, tending the dunes and participating in market days and the Quandamooka festival event "Care4Country"

We have so much to be grateful for on Coochiemudlo Island, we share this special environment with a diversity of wildlife and we're committed to preserving it for future generations.

Today I'd like to to acknowledge & celebrate achievements since our last AGM.

Our membership has helped Coastcare achieve significant environmental outcomes for the island.

Just this week we welcomed Council contractors back on our beaches after an absence of three years. Council's quick response to our pleas for assistance after ex TC Debbie was impressive. The clearing of initial flood debris along our shoreline, remediation of the beach access just north of the wetlands, beach scraping to cover exposed casuarinas along the eastern beaches and works on Main Beach

We're grateful for this prompt operational response and believe it augurs well in the lead-up to the long-awaited Shoreline Erosion Management Plan promised for the new financial year.

Another milestone is the developing Integrated Weed Management Plan which evolved in response to our concerns over herbicide spraying of the foreshores and natural areas three years ago.

Thanks to Cr Hewlett for securing \$35,000 in the 2016-17 budget to cover this initiative which could be the template for the rest of Redland City minimising the use of herbicides, protecting human health & promoting Coochie as a "clean green" destination.

Following the lead of other local governments, Coastcare is keen to see the use of alternate strategies like saturated steam and competitive native planting.

The finalisation of two grant projects at the end of 2016 marked a hectic end to the year. The wetlands interpretive signage project funded by a 25th Anniversary Landcare grant and opened by the Commissioner for Threatened Species, Gregory Andrews on November 30 co-incided with culmination of the wildlife surveys of the wetlands funded by a Conservation grant from Redland City Council.

We were privileged to have Commissioner Andrews representing the Minister for Environment and Energy, Josh Frydenberg and spend the day on Coochie with us. In the morning Commissioner Andrews walked our beaches, explored the mangroves, discussed weed issues and inspected the Phaius orchids and wetlands. The official opening was an inspiring occasion. From the Quandamooka Welcome by Patrick Coolwell & his didgeridoo playing to the Commissioner's address with sobering statistics on the rate of extinctions.

Our thanks go to Councillor Lance Hewlett, Master of Ceremonies and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Wendy Bolgary who moved the Vote of Thanks and also Coastcarer, Olive Walters who helped unveil the Quandamooka Welcome. We also appreciated the attendance of Council's Acting CEO Louise Rusan and Acting General Manager Lex Smith and Joel Bolzenius from Healthy Land and Water

Thank-you also to members of our sub-committee: our project officer Cheryl Bolzenius from WetlandCare Australia, Heather Smith, Carolyn Foley and my husband, Graeme, also our management committee and local artists Narelle Renn, Susan Kemp and Denis Lack who provided such constructive feedback along with Tamara Whyte whose guidance we valued. We are indebted to Gary Sheehy for his amazing photography and also Diane Gilham.

I'd also like to acknowledge Cr Hewlett who augmented this project with impressive timber boards out of his infrastructure fund and thanks to Council officers David Katavic and Bill McDowell for installation.

At the opening Commissioner Andrews talked about the rate of wildlife extinction and confirmed feral cats as one of the greatest threats to Australian mammals, contributing to at least 28 of the 30 mammal extinctions since European colonisation.

According to the latest information from the Threatened Species Recovery Hub, feral cats are at much higher densities on islands than on the mainland. Where they occur on islands they were at higher densities on smaller rather than larger islands.

The results of a 12-month wildlife survey of the Melaleuca Wetlands by zoologist, Dr Ronda Green covering 480 trapping nights reports the absence of any mammal smaller than a bandicoot which is disturbing data. The full report can be found on Coastcare's website.

We support Dr Green's recommendations including the provision of an increased dog off-leash area on the Laurie Burns Oval

The study, "What lives in the Melaleuca Wetlands" was funded by a Conservation grant from Redland City Council. Thanks to all those volunteers who assisted with the wildlife surveys – the early morning and evening starts to check traps, spotlighting and cleaning equipment. It was appreciated, as was the use of Gindabara for accommodation and debriefs. Thank-you Carolyn Brammer.

We celebrate that our Coastcare volunteers continue to regularly weed, revegetate and tend gazetted work-zones covering almost a kilometre of rehabilitated foreshore while encouraging younger members through the Junior Rangers program. After this week's remediation there's a lot more planting to be done

One of the highlights of 2016 was Energex declaring Coochie a chemical-free spray zone following representation over damage from herbicide spraying – bouquets to a good corporate citizen, Energex! Thanks also to Cr Hewlett for expressing concerns at the highest level resulting in a positive interaction between Coastcare and Energex officers

Our monthly meetings continue with Cr Lance Hewlett to address environmental, maintenance and compliance issues relating to illegal camping, fires and need for more appropriate signage. It was pleasing to see temporary works undertaken by the Roads crew to address storm water run-off from Elizabeth Street at Morwong Beach prior to Debbie and we look forward to a permanent solution by June 30th.

It was valuable to revisit the 2004 Land Management Plan with Heritage Society President Keith Stebbins and undertake an audit on the progress of those recommendations. There's still more work to be done on matters relating to stormwater and weed management as well as cultural heritage on the island. Thank-you Keith for your time and contribution. Coastcare looks forward to supporting your organisation's submission for Heritage listing of the Emerald Fringe.

It was pleasing to note the new CityPlan redesignate part of Main Beach foreshore from Open Space to Conservation status. This was part of Coastcare's CityPlan submission in late 2015.

Participation in the Quandamooka Festival event, "Care4Country" with Tangalooma EcoMarines on island last September was certainly a highlight. With assistance of Mangrove Watch's Jock McKenzie and Debra Henry we were able to share the environmental attributes of Curlew Creek with our young visitors. Afterwards the community was invited to the smoking ceremony and dancing led by Josh Walker and the Yulu Burri Ba dancers. A great day was had by all and we look forward to future engagement.

An 11-week Lyngbya bloom, the worst ever seen by long-term residents that led to signage along our beaches finally dissipated in January. We were grateful for a very informative workshop held at the Community Hall by Paul Maxwell, Chief Scientist of Healthy Water and Land. Thanks to Peter Wear the presentation was filmed and is available online.

Discussions continued with Redland City Council over management of our gazetted work-zones and in February we received a permit until June 30 2017. At this stage there's no MOU or Legal Agreement however we're happy to revisit if required. We'd like to thank Queensland Water and Landcarers Executive Office, Darryl Ebenezer for his support.

The Management Committee advises members that the Association has current public liability insurance of \$30 million. This coverage is provided through our membership of Queensland Water and Landcarers with Funds provided by the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines.