



AGM 2019 – President’s Annual Report

Welcome to the sixth Annual General Meeting of Coochiemudlo Island Coastcare Inc.

I’d like to acknowledge the Quandamooka people, the traditional custodians of this land, of elders past and present. A special welcome to the Member for Redlands, Kim Richards MP and Deputy Mayor and Councillor for Division 4, Cr Lance Hewlett and Sheena.

It’s been a busy year on many fronts for Coastcare and I’d like to sincerely thank our wonderful volunteers who contribute in so many diverse ways - those weeders, beach regenerators, caterers, organisers, hands-on workers, behind the scenes committee and not forgetting all who provide moral support with memberships. Coochie is indeed fortunate.

Being invited to host a Field Trip for delegates to last year’s National Landcare conference in Brisbane opened our eyes to opportunity and also helped us reflect on the journey to date. We showcased the saturated steam weeding project funded by a Community Sustainability Action grant from the Queensland Government, the Landcare interpretive signage in the Melaleuca Wetlands and beach restoration following the storm surge from ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald in 2013. That collaborative project between SEQ Catchments, Coastcare and Redland City Council was enabled by funding by WetlandCare Australia supporting our wetlands, part of the Moreton Bay Ramsar site.

As both interpretive signage and steam weeding projects were undertaken in collaboration with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation it was fitting to have QYAC Ranger, Brandon Martin welcome Australia's leading Landcarers to Country. There was a high degree of interest in the success of the saturated steam weeding project where Coastcare volunteers & QYAC rangers have been undertaking chemical-free weeding around the foreshore. The current grant which wraps up in September has also seen revegetation of denuded areas with the planting of 2500 native ground covers, grasses, shrubs and trees, many propagated in the island's native nursery. Funding also covered seed-raising and potting mix for the nursery and 549 plants for Bushcare.

The saturated steam weeding and revegetation project is delivering positive results and putting a smile on faces of volunteers as three treatments of primary sites appears to have significantly depleted the weed seed bank resulting in minimal regrowth. At this stage we’ve successfully targeted carpets of Mothers of Million and the Satu steam 800 has also proven itself on guinea grass and Singapore Daisy.

Just before Christmas, we became aware of the Australian Government offering funding to be acquitted before June 30th for restoration works under the National Landcare Program, Regional Land Partnerships Project - Healthy Land and Water Moreton Bay Ramsar Project. With Cr Hewlett’s help we approached Council with a proposal to extend our workzones for six months west of Wetlands track, including four watercourses and the weed-infested north-east of the island. We were appreciative of officer support and Council augmenting

the project with hundreds of additional plants. Funding of \$18,651 enabled weeding and revegetation over two extra hectares, again working with QYAC rangers and undertaking many hours of saturated steaming of Mothers of Million. As well, we engaged chem-free contractors Tali and Jono from Bushtekniq to undertake six days of hand-weeding through the Melaleuca Wetlands.

In April we accessed further funding of \$11,000 to be acquitted before the end of the financial year. This time we collaborated with Council to address erosion and rehabilitate the beach access adjacent to the northern edge of the Melaleuca wetlands, close an informal track with brush matting near culturally sensitive sites and undertake intensive revegetation. The tiger mesh was replaced this week with a small span of permanent fencing and Council will oversee importing sand from the barge ramp to cover the dune scarp while another 400 grasses and ground covers will be planted.

There's agreement that long-term, geo-bags are needed to stabilize this beach access

Last month Healthy Land and Water offered to support another \$18,000 in Landcare funding for fencing to replace the rusted star pickets at Flinders (the Outriggers Beach) After six years, the original collaborative fencing project between SEQ Catchments, Council and Coastcare will be complete. From Monday contractors will be onsite with a QYAC Cultural Heritage Monitor to oversee installation, same as the dune fencing along the eastern beaches and set in the original footprint to protect foreshore habitat.

Sincere thanks to Healthy Land and Water for entrusting Coastcare with Landcare funds and supporting these projects and to Council officers who are working with us to meet that crucial end of financial year deadline.

Since the last AGM, outside our regular working bees, we've held 12 management meetings, two general meetings, quarterly meetings with Cr Hewlett, including one with Kim Richards, continued the saturated steam weeding project, hosted the Field trip for the National Landcare Conference and enjoyed another great Christmas party along the way. Market days help us stay in touch with wider community and there's always a spare chair or two for anyone wanting to chat.

In September, David Kemp resigned from the Management Committee after 41/2years dedicated service and Andrew Ross was appointed to fill a temporary vacancy in accordance with the Model Rules under which we operate. In January when Secretary Lois Toop resigned Chris Leonard temporarily took on the role. We're indebted to Lois for her creative talents and attention to detail over the past three years, in particular the development of the website. Soon after we welcomed David O'Hagan as Membership Secretary. In March, Heather Smith, resigned after four years to focus on Progress and the Markets followed in April by the ever-reliable and tireless worker, Chris Leonard. Happy to say that Dave, Chris and Heather remain active Coastcarers and as all are trained operators of the saturated steam-weeder we're grateful for their continued contribution. On behalf of the membership I thank-you sincerely for your efforts furthering the goals of Coastcare.

While Treasurer Phil Toop steps down from official duties today after three years' service it's reassuring to know that he's still available to assist when needed. Sincere thanks from all of us Phil for a sterling effort guiding us through grant finances in particular.

Main issues of year centred around the developing Shoreline Erosion Management Plan, following-up environmental health risks in the Melaleuca Wetlands, finding a home for our equipment, island signage, compliance and weed management.

Coastcare is represented on the Community Reference Group for the Shoreline Erosion Management Plan, established in late 2017. We're fortunate to have our esteemed guest speaker, Dr Michael Gourlay also on the committee. In October, the SEMP Open House attracted about 40 people to the Recreation Club. Attendees were asked to identify key areas of economic, social and environmental value. It's expected a draft plan will be finalised by consultants BMT WBM before the end of the month. We need committed operational spend to match final recommendations.

Thanks to Kim Richards who facilitated a walk along our beaches with Mayor Karen Williams and Cr Hewlett for his continued efforts to support ongoing remediation of our valued natural resources – our sandy beaches. It was reassuring to have the Mayor commit to capital expenditure for erosion works this coming financial year and we look forward to finalising the SEMP.

Groundwater testing continues in the Melaleuca Wetlands following a commitment by Council to investigate a consultant's report commissioned by Coastcare two years ago that highlighted environmental health risks from confirmed heavy metal contamination in the vicinity on the closed landfill site. Engineering consultancy GHD have undertaken extensive works since and recently released two reports which we'll add to the website. It's been a protracted process but as a senior council officer said, "it's important to get the science right." Groundwater testing was fraught with difficulty during last year's drought.

Between the saturated steam weeder, the equipment trailer and everything else we've accumulated Coastcare is desperate for a home. The search for a block of land for a shed started 21/2 years ago. We're getting closer but any thoughts welcome.

We're hopeful on-going communication with Council and growing evidence-based practice of saturated steam weeding on island will see a softening of approach in regards alternate weed management including reduction in the use of herbicides. Following reports from members the management committee formalised a complaint late last year when two instances of inappropriate spraying took place. We thank Lance for his continued support.

For those interested in statistics here are a few numbers for consideration.

As of 14 June 2019, current financial members totalled 140 including 86 Life members. Coastcare has a membership base of 333 and historically it usually takes until September to collect the majority of annual dues. We finished 2019 with 215 financial members.

Over the course of the year Coastcarers have contributed 928 official volunteer hours caring for the island. Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics figures 2017-18, volunteers are now worth \$41.72 per hour so that translates to \$38,716.

Monthly Dunecares attract an average 17 volunteers weeding, planting and tending the beach – interestingly, working on Flinders or the Outriggers Beach is the most popular drawing 24 volunteers on two occasions last year.

The Management Committee advises members that the Association has current Public Liability Insurance of \$30,000,000. This coverage is provided through our membership of Queensland Water and Land Carers with funds provided by the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Management Committee sincere gratitude to Cr Lance Hewlett and Kim Richards for their guidance and support, grateful thanks to those supportive Council officers who've helped us achieve such positive outcomes and to our network partners, Healthy Land and Water and Queensland Water and Landcarers. We couldn't have done it without you.

Vivienne Roberts-Thomson