

President's Report June 2021

Welcome to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of Coochiemudlo Island Coastcare Incorporated in this 50th anniversary year of the signing of the RAMSAR Convention. I'd like to acknowledge the Quandamooka people, the traditional custodians of this land, of Elders past and present.

It's been a busy time for Coastcare with COVID 19 restrictions adding additional layers of accountability while we maintain existing workzones and progress the Landcare project in the Melaleuca Wetlands. We've responded with submissions on the Shoreline Erosion Management Plan (SEMP); Temporary Commercial Use of Public Open Space, the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy and more recently the SEQ Natural Resource Management Plan.

Tonight, I'm reporting on activity over the past nine months, as last year's extended deadline due to COVID saw our AGM postponed until it was finally held outdoors on September 12.

At the outset, I'd like to express gratitude to members of the Management Committee for their continued dedication to Coastcare ideals and ongoing support. While farewelling two, David O'Hagan, our Membership Secretary and Graeme Roberts-Thomson who filled a temporary Vacancy as Secretary when Liz Engeman stepped down in October, the rest of the committee have opted to stand for re-election. Thank-you David, Graeme and Liz for your contributions.

To our wonderful volunteers, the solo weeders, turtle monitors and saturated steam weeders, thank-you. Your efforts around the island, particularly in the six hectares of work zones over one and a half kilometres of the eastern shoreline and Melaleuca Wetlands sustains crucial funding. I'd also like to acknowledge the ongoing support and guidance of Kim Richards MP and Councillor Lance Hewlett. Thanks to Kim for sponsoring two interpretive signs highlighting the challenges faced by our migratory wading birds. We look forward to these being displayed on the jetties in due course.

In November we were pleased to receive a \$1700 grant to purchase a new computer and first aid training for seven volunteers. The funding was made available through the 2020 Supplementary Volunteer Grants Activity as part of the Australian Government and Volunteering Queensland's work to support the efforts of Australia's volunteers. Thanks to David O'Hagan who so effortlessly set up our new computer as such a valuable resource.

Our four-year grant project continues, supported by Redland City Council, to reduce threats and restore habitat in and around our Melaleuca Wetlands, part of the Moreton Bay Ramsar site. It's always inspiring to work alongside chem-free contractors Bushtekniq who enjoy sharing their knowledge and seeing Coastcarers hone practical bush regeneration skills. We're now at the half-way mark of this \$65,000 grant project, supported by **Healthy Land and Water** through funding from the **Australian Government's National Landcare Program**. The results are rewarding. I'd like to acknowledge Council efforts to address the weed infestation from the waste transfer station and also for providing us with the fire hydrant attachment, 100 metres of hose and training to cover those zones without water access.

I'm pleased to report Council has provided an extension of time on the eight-page guide for residents, "Living on the Edge" funded by a Conservation grant and being developed in liaison with state and local government with the aim to preserve foreshore values and ensure the needs of both marine and terrestrial wildlife are better understood.

After five years, our priority for the year was and still is, negotiating a home-base for Coastcare to house two specialist trailers and equipment. At this stage, I'm pleased to report we're getting closer. Since October there has been ongoing discussion with council officers and two site meetings. Thanks to the sub-committee, Gaye, Bryan, Graeme & Peter with input from architect Kurt Piccardi, we're hopeful this will be the year! The site Council chose for us faces Elizabeth Street and is adjacent to the track to the community shed. Coastcare will need to seek approximately \$40,000 grant funding for the build. No trees will be removed, and native vegetation will be used to promote product from the Native Nursery. At this stage I'd also like to acknowledge the wonderful efforts of the Nursery for so generously providing us with plants, in excess of 400 over the past nine months.

Late last year we also took delivery of a banner, "Ours to Protect" and are now working on a Coastcare one, kindly facilitated by a grant from RedVic Lions.

Coastcare patiently awaits the implementation of recommendations of the 2020 Shoreline Erosion Management Plan and looks forward to beach nourishment before the next storm season to restore the resilience of the frontal dune, from Control Points 2-4 along Norfolk Beach and to preserve the integrity of the RAMSAR-listed Melaleuca Wetlands, heritage-listed Emerald Fringe and Matthew Flinders 1799 landing site.

The key finding, first highlighted at a Community Reference Group meeting in August 2019 is that there is "no external source of sand for the eastern side of the island" This fact was discussed and agreed to by consultants, Malcolm Andrews, Jessie Cullen and locals, Drs Pillsworth and Gourlay and is included in the revised February 2020 Shoreline Erosion Study (SES), part of the SEMP. The implications are serious as the only sand feeding Morwong and the southern beaches comes from erosion of the eastern shoreline. It's reassuring to know Council already has permits in place to undertake nourishment of 5000 cubic metres per annum. Meanwhile Council and state government are still to resolve the use of geobag walls which have been part of the landscape for seven years with neither, causing detriment to the beach, according to consultants.

A Right to Information release by Council in November shed further light on the results of groundwater monitoring in the Melaleuca Wetlands after a commitment by council to investigate a report highlighting environmental health risks from confirmed heavy metal contamination. A review of water quality in the reserve by deveco (2017) found heavy metals (copper and zinc) levels to exceed the 95% protection of freshwater species. It appears the State is now involved and has requested additional test wells be drilled to monitor acid sulphate levels. We'll look to share these results.

Last year Coastcare expressed concerns over the low environmental ratings attributed to the Melaleuca Wetlands and Norfolk Beaches in a review of the Coastal Adaptation Strategy (CAS) Matrix in the SEMP. We believed it failed to acknowledge Matters of National

Environmental Significance, the very reason for our federal Landcare funding. Our grant manager, Healthy Land and Water agreed and undertook an independent Ecological Assessment. We're awaiting the outcome. As the CAS matrix score drives prioritisation of project works across Redland City, the record needs to be set straight. It's reassuring to be advised the CAS is a living document and updates can be accommodated.

Before we wrap up the good news, I'd like to reminisce on the low-key Christmas party held outdoors in the grounds of the community hall and successfully raising \$899 in a wheelbarrow raffle. I'd like to thank Carolyn Brammer for allowing us to host a new members night on Mudlo's verandah in March. It was a lovely event and underscores the importance of social gatherings.

As of tonight, we have 157 financial members, including 120 Life members and 26 children. Since 12 September 2020 our volunteers (including solo weeders covered under Coastcare insurance) have contributed 765 hours to hands-on environmental care of the island. This equates to \$31,916.00 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics as volunteers are valued at \$41.72 per hour. Our turtle monitors, Annie Jamieson, Chris Leonard and Andrew Ross have dealt with 15 mortalities and one live stranding since September. It was a busy summer. Thank-you.

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

It's with heavy heart that I wind up with news from Wednesday's General Meeting of Redland City Council where it was decided to remove 29 of 112 strategies and plans on the corporate register, one of which was Coochiemudlo's 2004 Land Management Plan. Sadly, our 48-page Plan founded on such close consultation with the island community and official stakeholders over so many months, was quietly removed because Council officers deemed it no longer current. This time, however, there was no community consultation, nor response to our calls for a review.

Councillors Lance Hewlett and Paul Bishop were the only two who spoke against the motion. Cr Hewlett said no officer had ever discussed how a generic 2010 Conservation Management Strategy could replace such a detailed whole of island plan, as Coochie's. Noting the move to reduce land management plans, the Strategy also notes that "exceptional circumstances may dictate specific management requirements out of the ordinary." We believe Coochiemudlo is an "exceptional circumstance," and deserves a reviewed Plan.

At the end of the same meeting Council endorsed a new Land Management Plan, facilitating the use of Main Beach East as a site for Temporary Commercial Use of Public Open Space. A cursory inspection shows the original proposal has been scaled down and Foreshore West has been removed with Foreshore East amended to allow only one secondary use, facilitating the continuation of the existing boat hire business only. However, the Reserve

Purpose definition and consistent use refers “to be used for informal active recreation facilities, bike track, cricket net, tennis walls, half size tennis or basketball courts.”

Finally, I’d like to thank-you all for your attendance tonight, the obvious support and encouragement.

Vivienne Roberts-Thomson