

CONSERVATION NEWS
April-May 2022

Meetings third Wednesday of the month, 1.00 pm (*there may be changes; we'll keep you posted*)

At: Caloundra Power Boat Club, 2 Lamerough Parade, Golden Beach (TBA)

Executive:

President: Anne Wensley

Vice-Presidents: Paul Smith & Suzanne Aspland

Secretary: Jude Crighton (Ph: 5491 4153)

Treasurer: Judy Burns (Ph: 5441 3913)

Committee Member: John Roberts

Minutes: Jenny Gursanscky

Newsletter Editor: Helen Kershaw

Newsletter Distributor: Kirsten Blake

Contact

PO Box 275, CALOUNDRA Q 4551

Email: sunshine@wildlife.org.au

Faunawatch

Coordinator: Dr Paul Smith

Ph: 5443 831; email: faunawatch@wildlife.org.au

Our thanks to Caloundra MP Jason Hunt and staff for their kind support in the photocopying of *Conservation News*



From the AGM

The AGM was held on 4 April under COVID-safe conditions in a rotunda at Aroona, and the Executive was re-elected unopposed.

Anne's President's Report for 2021 shows the diversity of activities, lobbying and skills of the branch and its membership; Judy's audited Treasurer's Report once again is meticulous; and Paul's Faunawatch work reveals the depth of professional skill we offer in our work with government, educational institutions, developers and the public.

President's Report for 2021

Anne states: 'This is not a president's report, it is the President of one year reporting on the achievements of members'.

Financial membership is now 65, and Anne highlighted the work of long-term and recent members:

Jill Chamberlain received Wildlife Qld's Margaret Thorsborne Award in 2021 for her sustained commitment, letter writing and formidable networking skills, and fine-tooth combing of development applications. (Very rare skills Jill!)

Long-term member **Margaret Watson**, always available to help in any way she could, died in 2021 after a long illness.

Treasurer **Judy and husband Glenn Burns** received Council's Silver Mattock award for 20 years' service to BushCare in Nambour.

Lynch-pin Secretary of 7 years (thanks for all that 'info in your head') **Jude Crighton** was nominated for a 2022 Sunshine Coast Australia Day Environment Award.

Vice-president **Paul Smith** contributes his long-term commitment to Faunawatch, while **Vice-President Sue Aspland** applies her professional research skills to many topical issues.

Helen Kershaw produces professional and easy-to-read bi-monthly newsletters (There would be no president's report without *Conservation News*).

Jenny Gursanscky takes the all-important Minutes, and monitors the Ben Bennett Facebook page with its wealth of contributed information on birds, fungi, plants and insects from friends of the Park.

Environmental historian **Elaine Green** has outdone herself with *Piece by Piece: conservation and development on the Sunshine Coast 1960-2020*. Its production for students, Council, developers and the public was supported by a Sunshine Coast Council Cultural and Heritage Grant of \$10,000, and sales are approaching 200 from a print-run of 500.

Advance Dates

20 April, time and venue TBA: Executive meeting only due to school and public holidays (but ring Jude if you'd like to attend and contribute). **Discussion will include changing the day, time and venue of meetings: possibly a Thursday morning at 10 am.**

Faunawatch Outings

Third Monday walk in April is cancelled due to the public holiday; it may be rescheduled for later in the month (TBA).

Second Wednesday Walks, 8 am at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens continue in May; and **Third Monday walk venues** are TBA.

15 May, 9 am-1 pm: Aura Environment Day, Baringa Forest Park: shared event with TAPP & Healthy Land & Water. Possible walk with Paul. **Volunteers are required to assist with a stall to engage locals and visitors, and sell *Piece by piece*. Please contact our Secretary if you can help!**

July: Noosa Parks Association Friday Forum, day TBA. Sue Aspland to present on the **Bribie Island Breakthrough.**

Executive and General Meetings have been held in member homes, the Caloundra Powerboat Club and various parks, depending on COVID conditions.

Networking: As a newcomer on the Executive, Anne expressed her belief that our main strengths are our 60-year reputation and our ability to network widely with other groups and Council and government representatives and participate in coast-wide events, namely Sunshine Coast Council, Sunshine Coast Environment Council, Aura (Stockland), Land for Wildlife private properties, Take Action for Pumicestone Passage, Sunshine Coast Regional Art Gallery (Caloundra), Climate Emergency Declaration, Caloundra Residents Association, Value Caloundra (Prue Oswin and Emma Rees), Caloundra Aerodrome Master Plan (Isabel Jordan Bushland Park), Shelly/Moffat Beach Study with Council, Sunshine Coast Mass Transit, Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme Survey, Create Caloundra Council CBD, Clean Up Australia Day, Maleny Wood Expo, Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival, Healthy Land & Water, Bushcare Groups (Shelly Beach, Tooway Lake, Watson Park, Nambour and Golden Beach), Mass Transit Intergenerational Forum, government representatives (Federal Andrew Wallace, State Jason Hunt, Local Terry Landsberg, Peter Cox, Rick Baberowski, Maria Suarez), Ben Bennett Bushland Park Facebook page, Caloundra Greens, Shorebird Study Group, Friends of Mary Cairncross, Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens, World Environment Day, Night Eyes, Golden Beach Residents' Association and Currimundi Catchment Care group.

Faunawatch: Paul Smith continues to coordinate Faunawatch surveys on private Land for Wildlife properties under Council's Environment Levy Partnerships Grant program. A new Stockland Community Grant of \$9350 (2021-2022) now funds regular fauna surveys at Aura, including at the Blackbutt Forest and the Frog pond boardwalk, and the deployment of monitoring cameras. Ongoing surveys of the Environmental Protection Zone at the Aura site continue with funding via Healthy Land and Water.

Paul also organises monthly Faunawatch walks for members and the general public at local Bushland Reserves and at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanical Gardens. A walk at Jill Chamberlain Reserve at Little Mountain, Caloundra in late 2021 recorded 46 bird species, evidence of Eastern grey kangaroos, and a well-managed ecological burn area following the rain.

WildHeART, Junior Realistic Wildlife Art Prize: WPSQ has agreed to donate \$500, augmented by \$500 from several members, for prizes in the Kathleen McArthur Endangered Species section and other categories. A winners exhibition will be held at the Maroochy Botanic Gardens from 16 September to 3 October 2022. Sue Aspland, Jude Crighton and Anne Wensley are on the committee chaired by Marilyn Holness from Friends of the Sunshine Coast Regional Gallery.

Shelly Beach to Moffat Beach Coastal Study: Historically many varied uses of these two beaches and their foreshores have created conflict. To establish guidelines Council has

Elaine Green's *Piece by piece: conservation and development on the Sunshine Coast 1969-2020*

In March Elaine's presentation on the book to an audience of 50 was very well received at Noosa Parks Association's Friday Forum. Judy attended as salesperson, selling 10 copies.

Catch up at a meeting or Faunawatch outing and buy your copy for just \$35, which covers our production costs and provides the fascinating background to the work that we and other conservation groups do to hang on to the Coast's natural places.

Can't make it to a meeting or outing? Wildlife Qld is selling Elaine's book on their website and will send you a copy. Their higher price covers postage (it's a weighty book) and a small handling charge to support the work of Head Office.

The Bookshop at Caloundra has stock: Ph: 54 91 4836) as does the native plant nurseries Florabunda and Coolum Native Plants, and the centre at Mary Cairncross Reserve.

Or ask at your local bookshop; we are ready to stock their shelves in response to demand.

carried out a study coordinated by Council's Bill Haddrill and consultant Cathryn Chatburn allowing face to face meetings with all stakeholder groups. In October 2021 groups were called to hear the findings, but outcomes have been delayed as at April 2022.

Bribie Island breakthrough: Sue has been examining maps, data and historical records as background to the January 2022 breakthrough and is working on WPSQ's behalf with TAPP to prepare a document for presentation to all levels of government re the immediate and future sustainable management of this waterway. John Roberts, our member as well as a member of TAPP, expresses a shared opinion that state government's attitude ('it is a natural process') may be incorrect due to possible contributing factors of dredging in the Spitfire Channel to the south-east of Bribie Island and the effect of old oyster lease structures in the Passage opposite Golden Beach's Nelson Street.

Sue has been asked to speak at a Noosa Parks Association's Friday Forum in July and has sought background assistance from Ken Mewburn, a long-term WPSQ and TAPP member. **Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve, Queensland Air Museum Expansion, Caloundra Aerodrome Master Plan:** QAM has been pushing to expand its display area for some years, however the new president of the QAM is approachable and appeared open to our views when discussing expansion plans with us. Council is developing a Caloundra Aerodrome Master Plan with SMEC Holdings Ltd Consultants, and Jude and Sue at a meeting with Melissa Griffin and ecologist Kylie McPherson from SMEC, were heartened that our PowerPoint prepared by Helen Kershaw on the ecological values of Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve, adjacent to QAM, had been carefully considered. WPSQ also pointed out the ecological values of the whole airport landscape.

Ben Bennett Bushland Reserve and Caloundra Transport Corridor Upgrade: An off-ramp from Nicklin Way at the southern end of Ben Bennett Park has been on the drawing board since 2015. Present proposals from Council and the state Transport and Main Roads are for four lanes plus bicycle lanes and median strips to proceed into Caloundra's Bicentennial Park. There are compulsory land acquisitions in Third Avenue and Oval Avenue.

Council, in response to feedback at their information sessions, appear not to have been listening to the enormous opposition from many community groups to the damage to Ben Bennett Bushland Park, as well as the social impact of four lanes. A public meeting convened by the Caloundra Residents Association and Value Caloundra Community has shed little light on the planning process, although both Sunshine Coast Council and TMR stated that the 4-lane design was 'concept only' and TMR appeared not to have closed investigations into two lanes. The possibility of participation in Community Reference Groups was also raised.

Groups opposing the destruction of the south end of the park are WPSQ Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Branch, Value Caloundra Community, Caloundra Residents Association,

From discussion after the AGM:

Our Bursary to a 2nd year Sunshine Coast University Environment student:

Elaine moved a proposal (seconded by Kirsten and carried) to increase the bursary from \$500 to \$1000. Elaine will liaise with University staff re the timing of the award and contact with the recipient. A student presentation to the branch could be negotiated.

Future of Kangaroos on the Sunshine Coast

Elaine proposed that we source research on the future of the genetically unique clade of eastern grey kangaroos struggling to find habitat as development spreads. This could be a useful input into the SCPlanning Scheme, with a goal of declaring them 'a species of local significance', which would also have application to the State-controlled development at Aura. SCEC (Narelle McCarthy) was considered a first port of call to identify contacts, and Paul noted that USC's Elizabeth Brunton has used Faunawatch data for her PhD on the eastern greys, and that Council has a significant species list that includes swamp wallabies. Elaine and Paul are to confer.

Maleny Wood Expo has unfortunately been cancelled due to COVID. As the 4-day event is one of our major opportunities to

Friends of Ben Bennett (Facebook), Caloundra Greens, a group '2lanesnot4', and all the environmental groups that use the Park.

WPSQ feedback on draft planning documents: Jill Chamberlain and Sue Aspland have proposed improvements to Council's Sunshine Coast Mass Transit strategy and the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme, and the state's Draft Southern Sunshine Coast Transport Strategy.

Anne concluded her report: 'Thank you to everyone for your passionate commitment, drive, stickability, sense of humour and especially to our font of ALL information – Jude'.

Treasurer's Notes on 2021 Audit Report

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 comprise the Independent Audit Report, Statement of Income & Expenditure, Balance Sheet, Notes to the financial report, and Statement by members of the management committee.

Income

In 2021 our major sources of income were grants and book sales.

We received **four grants:**

- the usual \$50,000 Sunshine Coast Council Environment Levy Partnership grant for fauna surveys largely on Land for Wildlife properties;
- \$9,400 from Healthy Land & Water for ongoing surveys at Aura;
- and a Stockland Aura Community Grant of \$9,350 for fauna surveys (including walks open to the public) at Baringa, in the Blackbutt Forest and along the Frog Pond boardwalk;
- a Sunshine Coast Council Cultural Heritage Grant for \$10,000 towards the publication of Elaine Green's book *Piece by Piece*. The group funds of \$8,219, including our initial commitment of \$5000, made up the final cost of \$18,219.

Thanks to Elaine's generosity and the hard work of Helen Kershaw in obtaining the grant, editing the book and seeing it through the printing process, 500 handsome copies were produced. In the seven weeks between its launch in November and the end of December, 139 books were sold for \$5,039.95, which more than covered our extra expenditure of \$3,219. Thanks to Paul for his work on the three fauna survey grant applications, and his ongoing management and reporting. And to Helen for her meticulous work on the book grant application and acquittal.

Membership fees are paid to Head Office in Brisbane, and our share in 2021 was \$746 (\$962 in 2020).

Donations: Elaine made a generous and timely donation of \$600 towards the printing of *Piece by Piece*; other donations included regular 'bottle money' ('cash for cans') from Jan Powell and Jude, and money from Jo Johnson from the sale of her cards.

As in 2020, we were unable to have our usual stalls.

connect with the public and we have lost this chance to sell copies of *Piece by piece*, please spread the word to your friends and contacts about how to acquire a copy (see above).

World Environment Day:

This is again likely to be a multi-venue event over the month of June. The 15 June TAPP event at SS Onslow at Golden Beach provides an opportunity to run Sue's mangrove walk, which was cancelled last year.

Moffat Shelly Coastal Study:

Council's Chief coordinator Bill Haddrill has held a workshop for Councillors to increase their understanding of the state legislative constraints on the sites (Department of Environment and Science, the Herbarium, turtle experts, etc), and Council has made a self-referral under the Commonwealth EPBC Act which will not be delayed by the Federal election. Pressure from the CRA and others for a resolution continues and Bill Haddrill has assured us that the webpage will be updated 'soon'. The date for the final report's presentation to Council is not known.

Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve:

There are no reported further developments re the Caloundra Airport Plan.

Clean Up Australia Day

Cancelled due to rain, this important day may be re-scheduled.

Interest: Our Heritage Bank online account earned \$107 interest; and term deposits \$133, down on the previous year.

Expenditure

Most of our expenditure was for the work associated with our grants. The Cultural Heritage grant was the only one fully expended within our financial year; the fauna survey grants all extend into 2022.

\$500 went to our annual award for a USC environmental studies student. We pay for a *Wildlife* subscription for USC. And we purchased a banner and prints for use at stalls and other public events.

Members Funds

Our total funds at 31 December 2021 were \$56,287, held in three accounts: our cheque account, online account and a term deposit. Of this \$5,810 is uncommitted funds, with the balance being unexpended grant money.

Auditor

Thanks to our honorary auditor Vicki Davies for again auditing our financial statements. Vicki is prepared to continue as auditor.

Faunawatch

Council is looking to advertise Faunawatch walks to increase public participation and wildlife awareness.

March's Faunawatch walk at the Blackbutt Forest at Aura contributes towards our Stockland surveys (earlier surveys have recorded swamp wallabies, bandicoots, antechinus, lace monitors, striped marsh frogs, acid frogs; night spotlighting has revealed snakes and toads, but no possums).

Point of interest: the Sunshine Coast has Australia's highest take-up by landholders in the Land for Wildlife program.

Under Faunawatch's current Council grant program, 20 bird surveys and 7 full surveys have been completed on Land for Wildlife properties.

Survey data from Aura will be publicly available.

Faunawatch outings are to be advised.

Further information on our major issues, from the April Executive meeting and discussion following the AGM

Bribie Island breakthrough

Golden Beach resident and member Alan reported that the impact of increased tide heights and wave action is significant in the Passage and that engineers from Sunshine Coast University and UQ are preparing hard data on water movements. As the breakthrough widens (with erosion apparently occurring at its southern end) it has now been designated the Caloundra Bar by Marine Safety Qld; the old northern entrance continues to narrow.

The loss of TAPP's mangrove regeneration site has been exacerbated by the poor compaction of adjacent fill from Gemini Towers some years ago. John Groves (local historian

While Sunshine Coast Council has closed applications for participation in a community consultation panel for the Sunshine Coast Ecological Park adjacent to Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve at Maleny, there may be opportunities for submissions on its use.

Our member and bird photographer Phil Bender, with his experience on the Reserve's management committee of earlier times, provides background and an impassioned case for its future use as '100% bio':

The purchase of a land parcel by the Sunshine Coast Council adjacent to the Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve is to be applauded as a positive step towards providing a viable future for the very stressed and isolated original forest remnant donated by the Thynne family. The acquisition was first discussed during my time serving on the management committee of M.C.S.R. and has come about largely through the negotiating efforts of the late Bob Taylor. The acquisition has been funded through the Environment Levy, equally by every rate-payer. Accordingly, all should equally benefit. The only way Council can deliver this is by creating an oxygen bank. With a massive loss of vegetation on the Sunshine Coast and huge population growth it is bio-reality that more trees are needed to consume our waste CO² and produce the life-giving oxygen that all life forms, including us humans, need. Everyone benefits, equally.

There should not be excessive human activity, and no horses or other domestic animals, no bicycles or motor vehicles, no infrastructure, and no sporting fields of any description.

and image collector) has provided Sue with details of old oyster lease structures possibly affecting sand movement. Member Roger Callen, a retired marine geologist, is keen to contribute to the discussion.

There are reports that National Parks has recorded 25 kangaroos on the northern tip.

Sue will present a paper at a Noosa Parks Association Friday Forum in July.

Ben Bennett Bushland Park/Caloundra Transport Corridor Upgrade:

Jackie reported to the Executive on the recent community forum (102 attendees) organised by the Caloundra Residents Association, noting our disappointment at the absence of the chief engineer due to his lack of COVID vaccination. Staff from Transport and Main Roads were more willing to engage than Council it seems, and we should pick up on this and seek answers to questions on the project plan, sequencing and timing, especially as two lanes appears to remain an option, with no apparent reason for four lanes (TMR has responsibility for the off-ramp across Ben Bennett, and Council from Third Avenue). As well as further community engagement, bringing together WPSQ, CRA, RSL, Chamber of Commerce and other groups with Council and TMR plus specialist input on, eg, environmental issues (Jude advised by Sue Aspland; SCEC's Narelle McArthy), could ensure success. Graeme of the CRA is to summarise the meeting events and organise possible group consultation and a timeline.

The Ben Bennett Explorer Map for children put together by Active Transport engineer Prue Oswin and Friends of Ben Bennett is perfect for the April holidays. Download a pdf to print out:

<https://sidelinestraffic.com.au/community?fbclid=IwAR0OV8WIZnyl8Fxeclt7txjhJtq2MEOW7ls3GIMrXrddyBsGfQ6o3bdpEY>

Feedback on the draft Southern Sunshine Coast Public Transport Strategy & Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2041:

Sue lodged submissions for WPSQ, with input from Jackie and the CRA.

The capacity to respond in the public transport survey was hamstrung by very limited mapping, however Sue teased out many issues, particularly concerning the path of the CAMCOS corridor and the role of the CTCU proposal in easing congestion on the Caloundra Road roundabout:

'The Nicklin Way, Caloundra Road, Pelican Waters Boulevard roundabout has been identified as a traffic bottleneck, with a proposal for a Nicklin Way/Third Avenue/Oval Avenue route to Omrah Avenue (Caloundra Transport Corridor Upgrade/CTCU) currently at design stage and due for completion in late 2024. While possibly due to a mapping scale misinterpretation, our impression is that the rapid transit route servicing the Caloundra City Centre and north appears to indicate a Caloundra Interchange via Bowman Road to City Centre option.

Educational and commercial activities are already covered at the Rainforest Discovery Centre. There should be no use of this land as a convenient off-set against further destructive development on the Coast. A purely visionary revegetation project using best practice and scientific advice to re-create the sub-tropical rainforest that was the Blackall Range should be the goal.

Just like Council's Think Big Solar Farm there really is no other option than to think big on this project by implementing a restoration project larger than anything attempted before in the Sunshine Coast area.

Why is this rapid transit (blue) route not using the current CTCU proposal for a city centre access road via Nicklin Way to Omrah Avenue?

The rapid transit route appears to indicate the proposed northbound route via the upper Tooway Lake catchment.

Why is the proposed CTCU road not being considered as a designated two lane (one lane each way) mass transit route, ie, excluding private vehicle use, to encourage use of public/mass transit?

Similarly, the western suburban collector (orange) routes all appear to still use the roundabout route.

If the CTCU road is proposed to remove vehicles and reduce the bottleneck why are these western suburban collector (orange) routes not using this proposed new road rather than the roundabout?'

Re our response to feedback on the draft Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme, Sue pointed out that the addressing of environmental issues is significantly lacking, and that we need to accept that this is a first stage only in consultation. Again there is little detail and context.

Other matters

The Wild HeART Student Art Prize has been publicised throughout schools and across Queensland with entries closing on 17 July. The prize is supported by Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden, Friends Regional Gallery Caloundra Inc., Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Inc., and Queensland Wildlife Artists Society Inc.

On our request the Endangered Australian Flora or Fauna prize is to be called the Kathleen McArthur prize.

<https://botanic-garden.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/See-and-do/Wild-HeART-Student-Art-Prize>

Australia Day Awards/Environmental category: Jude, nominated by Jill, was up against a number of other worthy individuals and groups; the award went to ECOllaboration (formerly Maroochy Waterwatch). Anne is keen to nominate WPSQ Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Inc for an award in 2023, focusing on 60 years of activism. The newsletter archive is available (in storage) and records of the Southern Branches Get-together at Coolum some years ago may be useful; Jill of course will have the knowledge.

<https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Living-and-Community/Awards-and-Citizenship/Australia-Day-Awards/Australia-Day-Award-Nominees-2022>

Birds with Phil Bender

The Golden Whistler
(Pachycephala pectoralis)
Is a delightful species to encounter in the forest or backyard. Beautiful plumage and an even better song make for an unforgettable experience. They are, despite their flamboyance, a bit of a lurker amongst the outer branches of canopy trees right down to almost ground level where they hunt for a range of insect life.

